

Orlan/Deleuze

Corporeal / (In)Corporeal

by Suzanne Moss



Submitted in fulfilment of
the requirements for the
degree of Master of Arts,
University of Tasmania,
January 2003

Orlan / Deleuze: Corporeal / (In)Corporeal

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Suzanne Moss

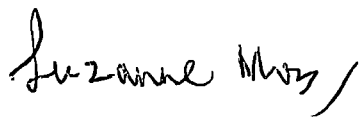
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B. Ed. Hons. (Bradford UK)

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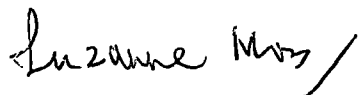
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MA Thesis Abstract

“Orlan / Deleuze: Corporeal / (In)Corporeal”

Suzanne Moss

School of English, Journalism and European Languages, University of Tasmania

Due Date: 31 December 2002

“Orlan / Deleuze” comprises an introduction, three chapters and a conclusion. The introduction surveys the French performance–artist Orlan, who for the past thirty-five years has worked with the materiality of her own body to create a “body” of contemporary art work which has provoked the art world in a number of ways. In the 1990’s Orlan combined elements and recurring themes from her past work to create a “performance for the future” titled *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan*. This series provides a recurring focus throughout the dissertation. Commentators have invoked a diversity of discursive frameworks to explicate the multiple elements of Orlan’s *Reincarnation*. However the failure of these critiques to provide a sustained reading remains unsatisfying. The introduction signals that the conceptual schemas of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari will be activated in order to clear the ground of metaphysical concepts so that the affect of Orlan’s corporeal practice can be apprehended in a sustained way.

Chapter One situates Orlan as a concept–event intervening against the problem of a representational culture that portrays the body as ideal and seamless. Spinoza’s formulation “What can a body do?” provides an informing question that enables a way of engaging with Orlan’s corporeal strategy. This chapter modulates Orlan’s art through a Deleuzian framework and discusses how the event of Orlan’s non–face counter–actualises the designation Woman as Face.

Chapter Two surveys Deleuze–Guattari’s concepts of faciality and the incorporeal transformation effectuated by order–words. The alliance of the market and the socius in sustaining and circulating desired images of the face is also identified. The rules of the assemblage are applied to explicate Orlan’s practice and the chapter presents an argument that Orlan enacts a becoming–minor of the face.

Chapter Three situates Orlan’s multi-medial practice as “cinematic” and approaches Deleuze’s concept of the time–image as co-extensive with Orlan’s corporeal art, through the revelation of the unthought within thought. The spectatorial responses to the reception and viewing of Orlan’s mediatised performances are also surveyed.

The conclusion considers the ontological premise of contemporary art. In response to the uncomprehending and negative reactions to Orlan’s project three concrete rules are presented for contemporary art.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to Dr Elizabeth McMahon for her time, patience and encouragement in supervising the beginning of this thesis. Many thanks are due to Dr Ian Buchanan for his theoretical guidance throughout the last two years of the project and for the challenge and thoroughness of his responses. Special thanks to Dr Angela Rockel who began this Deleuzian journey when she handed me the Introductory “Rhizome” chapter from *A Thousand Plateaus*, and to Julie Hunt for her striking cover design.

Finally, thanks to my family and friends for their unfailing support and belief that I could complete this project.

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List of Abbreviations for titles referred to in the dissertation

<i>Kafka</i>	<i>Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature</i>
<i>Metacommentary</i>	<i>Deleuzism: A Metacommentary</i>
<i>Millennial</i>	<i>Millennial Female</i>
<i>Philosophy?</i>	<i>What is Philosophy?</i>
<i>Plateaus</i>	<i>A Thousand Plateaus</i>
<i>Parables</i>	<i>Parables for the Virtual</i>
<i>Tiny Sexes</i>	<i>A Thousand Tiny Sexes</i>

Introduction

1. Introducing Orlan

Orlan is a French multi-media and performance artist who for the past thirty-five years has worked with the materiality of her own body to create a “body” of contemporary art work that has provoked the art world in a number of ways. Orlan is not the artist’s “real” name, but one she created for herself in 1962 at the age of fifteen. Her persona, *Saint Orlan*, was baptised and adopted in 1972. These alternate names indicate how central the question of identity is to Orlan’s career. The name Orlan evokes allusions to the synthetic fibre Orlon, to the French cosmetic label Orlane, to the gender fluidity of Virginia Woolf’s “Orlando” and the Maid of Orleans, to Pauline Réages pornographic novel, “The Story of O”, and the malleability of gold - *or*. The initial syllable *Or* of Orlan’s name suggests the either / or alternatives of her work, while accentuating its *between-ness* – the this OR that – the undecidable territory of the space between. This between-ness or undecidability of Orlan’s contemporary art practice is created with potent effect in the most well known and controversial project of Orlan’s thirty-five year oeuvre – her project of self-invention or incarnation through a series of plastic surgery interventions titled *The Ultimate Masterpiece: The Reincarnation of St Orlan* (1990 –). The undecideability inherent in her name is emblematic of this project as a whole. It is the task of this project to figure a way of grasping that undecideability for and of itself. In other words it aims to produce an immanent critique.

Central to Orlan’s oeuvre has been the utilisation of her own body as the primary medium for her art. Examples include Orlan’s street performance series *Le Mesurage* (1965 – 1980), where Orlan used her body – the “Orlan-corps” as the foot or cubit of Antiquity to measure the length of urban and institutional spaces in various European

cities including the Vatican, Rome, Strasbourg, Lyon and Paris. A reading of *Le Mesurage* is the visibility of a solitary woman's body in a public space, a representation which emphasises femaleness and the gender-bias of measurement systems. The differing relations of the two sexes to geometry, architecture, design and space are also implicitly revealed (Ince, *Millennial* 39). Often these pieces displayed her wit: for example in a 1965 *mesurage*, Orlan compared the length of streets named after famous men, wondering why a "Chateaubriand" measures 550 *orlans*, and a "Victor Hugo" only 25 (Lovelace, *Offensive Acts* 18). Following each measuring Orlan ritually washed the clothes worn during the performance, collecting the sweat and street-stained water in a bowl, before transferring it to wax-sealed jars as "relics" of Saint Orlan. This procedure was repeated a decade later in the *Reincarnation* series when the subcutaneous fat extracted from Orlan's body by liposuction was used in corporeal installations and vials of flesh and blood were sold to finance future surgery.

Orlan's 1976 street performance titled *Baiser de l'artiste / The Kiss of the Artist*¹ provides another instance of the centrality of Orlan's corporeality to her art practice. This work consisted of a photo sculpture of Orlan's naked torso. At throat level was a written instruction "Insert 5F", with an arrow pointing to a nearby slot for the coins. Participants in the performance watched their 5F coins fall down a transparent tube into a triangular see-through container attached at the sculpture's crotch. When the coin had descended, Orlan leapt from a nearby position and gave each participant a kiss (Ince, *Millennial* 38). This performance provided an obvious commentary on the laws of exchange and the circulation of commodities at work in the capitalist and

¹ *Baiser de l'artiste / The Kiss of the Artist* or automatic distribution, 5F performance at the FIAC (Foire internationale d'art contemporain), Grand Palais in Paris.

consumerist art markets. Orlan's own body was the commodity in this performance and through deploying it in this way Orlan controversially equated the exchange of commodities in the art market with the exchange of a woman's body in the economics of prostitution (38).

In the 1980s Orlan drew on the relationship between her own image and that of Catholic and Baroque religious iconography, using historical references to relate her corporeal art to religious imagery. Her attitudes to institutional religion, played out in mannerist style associated with the excesses of the high baroque, tapped and exploited the store of conflict-ridden imagery found in Catholic art history where sexuality and religion co-incide. Madonna representations and the personage of Saint Orlan were the core identities employed through a series of installations and performances that revealed playfulness, pastiche, kitsch and parody. Orlan's trousseau sheets were used to drape Orlan in the Madonna series including *White Madonna in Assumption* on video monitor and clouds of bubble wrap (1984).² Seated above a video monitor which provided a virtual image simultaneously to Orlan's actual image, clouds of bubble wrap fell about her feet and draped around the monitor. Orlan's bare right breast emerged from folds of white-cream satin, ornately folded in the manner of Baroque statuary, resembling Bernini's white marble (Ince, *Millennial* 16). Further works in the 1980s that focused on Orlan's sacred personae included the set of cinema publicity posters for "virtual" (unmade) films. These *mis-en-scenes* of religious tableaux were exhibited in the 1990s catalogue exhibition *Twenty Years of St Orlan's advertising and cinema* in Caen. The tongue-in-cheek slogans on these brightly mounted cinema posters included, *Orlan before Saint*

² Cibachrome, 110 cm x 165cm. Included in the *Skaï et Sky* and video exhibition were the photographic and multimedia installations "Mise en scène for an assumption."

Orlan, Body in Glory (“Corps en gloire”), *Saint Orlan Our Lady of Plenty*, and *For all miracles, consult our tariffs*³ (17).

In the 1990s Orlan combined elements and recurring themes from her past work to create a performance for the future, culminating in the *Reincarnation of St Orlan*.⁴ Focusing on her own materiality, Orlan developed a strategy for self-representation using the technology of plastic surgery to sculpt an alternate identity into her own flesh. The *Reincarnation* project has involved nine⁵ surgical interventions to reconstruct Orlan’s given face to an-other face synthesized from five Renaissance and post-Renaissance representations of idealised female beauty. The selected elements include the forehead of Da Vinci’s *Mona Lisa*, the chin of Botticelli’s *Venus*, the mouth of Boucher’s *Europa*, the nose of *Diana* from an unattributed Fountainbleau school of sculpture and the eyes of Gerome’s *Psyche*. Each of these female prototypes was chosen because of its mythological-symbolic attributes including Diana’s aggression, Psyche’s need for love, Venus’ fertility, Mona Lisa’s androgyny and Europa’s permitting herself to look to another continent and another future (Rose, *Is It Art?* 85). These iconic features were computer-morphed and digitally merged with Orlan’s image to provide a hybridised template as a guide for the surgeon’s interventions. Her project interrogates the Old Masters’ envisioning of

³ “Imaginary Credits no. 15,” title of the virtual (unmade) film *For all miracles, consult our tariffs*. Painted cinema poster, acrylic on canvas, 200cm x 300cm (1986).

⁴ Although *Reincarnation* is the major artistic project undertaken by Orlan during the 1990s, her *Self-Hybridation* series exploring standards of beauty in pre-Colombian civilisations commenced in the mid 1990s. The digitally produced photographic prints from this project toured Mexico, Colombia, Venezuela and Brazil in 1999. See http://www.cicv.fr/creation_artistique/online/orlan/news/al_dante.html

⁵ The initiating performance took place in Newcastle on 30 May 1990, with the first, second, third and fourth operations occurring in Paris the same year. There was a nine month interval before the sixth, seventh, eighth and ninth interventions took place between February-December 1993, with the eighth and ninth operations following within a month of the *Omnipresence* surgery in November.

the idealised woman, in order to create new values and new images of what it is to think. This thesis will explore the ideas and provocations generated through Orlan's art and show that it falls outside of the paradigm of most kinds of art theory. An encounter with Orlan's art requires an immanent model. Whereas traditional art theory looks for meaning in the object, with Orlan it is to be found in the practice.

Each cosmetic intervention choreographed and directed by Orlan includes interactive communication with an international audience via fax, music, dance and elaborate costumes and décors. The surgical team, camera operators and signers for the deaf wear clothing conceived by leading French couturier Paco Rabanne and the Japanese designer Issey Miyake. Each intervention is organized around a theme, reflected in titles including: *Carnal Art*, *Identity Change*, *Initiation Ritual*, *This Is My Body*, *This Is My Software*, *I Have Given My Body to Art*, *Successful Operation(s)*, *Body / Status*, *Identity / Alterity* and *Omnipresence*. Rabanne developed the lime-green surgeons' robes, masks and drapes and the vivid yellow operating table covers for the *Omnipresence* intervention (1993). These elements were juxtaposed against images of Orlan's half-blue hair, and the red-seep of blood spilt during the surgery (Ince, *Millennial* 21).

The response of the spectator constitutes a recurring theme throughout each of Orlan's performance-interventions. The observer's presence is a necessary element of Orlan's corporeal art in order that the sensation of her open(end)ed body spills onto the body of the spectator. The effect of Orlan on the spectator can be read in three stages. Firstly an encounter with Orlan's surgical-interventions induces a state of suspended animation in the viewer which can be equated with stupor. Secondly as the sensation of Orlan is communicated as an excess-effect onto and across the viewer's

body, the observer shifts to a hyper-mutable state. Thirdly the spectators gather themselves and translate the effects of the sensation of Orlan into a diversity of emotionally-charged verbal responses. The question is whether there will be a difference or a slight divergence in the way some of the spectators – newly sensitised to Orlan’s making visible what it takes to become a woman – live their own corporeality? ⁶

A recurring element of each intervention is Orlan’s reading of literary and psychoanalytic texts. Orlan’s voice, intoning through the interstices of each procedure, incarnates the biblical injunction, “And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:14). *Reincarnation* is both the ultimate spectacle and the ultimate mediatised event. Orlan remains conscious while each intervention is videoed, photographed and transmitted to galleries around the world. Orlan combines Baroque iconography, medical technology and mass communications networks to critique the notion of beauty and prevailing Western concepts of identity, and to raise questions about the future of the body, the ethics of cosmetic surgery, and the body’s relation to accelerating communication and bio-medical technologies, while exploring the impact of these practices on the relationship between art and life in the twenty-first century. The image of Orlan’s open-ended face is both confronting and shocking, and its affect is to “jolt” the viewer’s apprehension that the face is fixed, normalised and standardised. Orlan unpacks or disassembles the face, feature by feature, to create an image that affirms Deleuze–Guattari’s philosophy of an active ethics or transcendental empiricism. Orlan’s selection of and engagement with diverse elements, including the body, art and technology, models a possibility that potentially expands life beyond the perspectives of what we consider life to be,

⁶ Paraphrased from Brian Massumi’s *Parables for the Virtual* 118–119.

through the production or becoming of future ideas. Orlan's approach is affirmed in her injunction: "Remember the future."

One of the most striking aspects of Orlan's art, particularly the *Reincarnation* series, has been the breadth of critical reception it has elicited from across the entire spectrum of disciplines, from the visual arts to medicine, gender studies, cultural studies, philosophy, cyber-culture and psychoanalysis. The diversity of discursive frameworks used to critique the impact and effect of Orlan's *Reincarnation* include gender performativity (Judith Butler), the abject (Julia Kristeva), the grotesque (Mary Russo), desire and lack (Lacan), the monstrous-feminine (Barbara Creed), the sociology of cosmetic surgery (Kathy Davis), techno-science and cyborg bodies (Donna Haraway) and the post-human (Rachel Armstrong). In addition Deleuze–Guattari's concepts of faciality (David Moos)⁷ and the body without organs (Michelle Hirschorn) have also been invoked in order to explicate the multiple elements of Orlan's *Reincarnation*. While all of these readings are locally valid, enabling a theoretical engagement with Orlan's contemporary art, the failure of these commentators, and by extension the interpretive critiques they utilise, to provide a sustained reading across the multiplicity of elements that constitutes Orlan's *Reincarnation* remains unsatisfying. Is this because Orlan's theatre of performance lends itself too easily to readings based on theories of the body, the grotesque, gender performativity and psychoanalysis? There is a failure to enquire beyond the theoretically obvious, as a result of Orlan's strategic corporeality, which could be

⁷ David Moos in his essay "Memories of Being: Orlan's Theatre of the Self", *Art & Text* 54, 1996, refers to Grotowski, Parveen Adams, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Deleuze and Guattari, William de Kooning and Rachel Armstrong in his explication of Orlan's *Reincarnation*. This is not to dismiss Moos's contribution to the theoretical engagement with Orlan's oeuvre, but his essay is invoked to provide an example of how reference to such a diversity of discourses reflects the impossibility for many commentators to offer a sustained reading of Orlan's project through a single theoretical framework.

described as “bait” or “lure”. Buchanan in his Deleuzist reading of the film *Blade Runner* refers to the limitations of psychoanalytic interpretations which fail “to find the obvious susceptibility of *Blade Runner* to psychoanalytic interpretations sufficiently suspicious” (*Metacommentary* 128). This observation can be similarly attributed to Orlan’s theoretical interlocutors, who forget to ask “How does Orlan’s project work?” Why, for example, do psychoanalytically conceived notions such as *castration*⁸ and *lack*, seem so obvious as to be clichéd when situated in the context of Orlan’s operation-performances? Her practice of self-invention reveals both the process and effect of systems of binary thought that are based on the centrality of the subject and the coherence of signification.

Given that such systems are deeply implicated in the regime of the State – and by extension the Socius⁹ and the Market – through the operations of oppression and social subordination, the philosopher Gilles Deleuze and the psychoanalyst Félix Guattari provide a set of procedures or concepts which problematise the pervasive influence of the dualisms central to metaphysical thought, specifically in relation to the either / or binary of identity and its correlative production of what throughout this dissertation will be designated Woman as Face. Instead of studying life within a closed set of binary systems, a central concern of Deleuze and Deleuze–Guattari’s complex and controversial¹⁰ conceptual schema, involves a consideration of the

⁸ For example Parveen Adams comments that “It is here on the operating table that castration occurs; not in the act of cutting, not in the drama of the knife, not in the barely suppressed frenzy of it all, but in the space which is opened up. In the space in which the face is unmade” (*Operation Orlan* 153).

⁹ For Deleuze–Guattari *the socius* includes the earth, the body of the despot and capital-money (*Anti-Oedipus* 281).

¹⁰ It is not my intention to rehearse the well-documented concerns of Alice Jardine’s *Gynesis: Configurations of Woman and Modernity* (1985) and Elizabeth Grosz’s *Volatile Bodies* (1994) in relation to the appropriation or subsumption of feminist interests and concerns by masculinist notions (machines) and appropriations (becoming-woman). There has been a subsequent re-evaluation of the potential of Deleuze–Guattari’s conceptual schema for

opening, instability and excess of systems: “how languages, organisms, cultures and political systems necessarily mutate and become” (Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* 3). Instead of affirming one more system of thought and ideas, Deleuze and Deleuze–Guattari’s works express the possible dynamism and instability of thought. Their complex and multi-layered books, *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*, subtitled *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, offer an extraordinarily rich set of theoretical materials that provide the possibility for a sustained metacommentary involving a dual process of reading Deleuze and reading with Deleuze (Buchanan, *Metacommentary*7), where procedures and methods are firstly invoked and secondly applied¹¹ to the multiple elements that constitute Orlan’s body of work.

2. Orlan / Deleuze

For the purposes of this project Deleuze and Deleuze–Guattari’s conceptual schema will be activated in order to clear the ground of metaphysical concepts – that have so far been deployed in reading Orlan – so that the affect of Orlan’s corporeal practice can be apprehended from within Deleuze’s immanent critique of subjectivity as an intensive, multiple and connective process of inter-relations. A cluster of concepts will be taken up and put to work against Orlan’s thirty-five year oeuvre. Notions of the rhizome, assemblage, multiplicity, desire, becoming, the Body without Organs, faciality, deterritorialisation, incorporeal transformation and the abstract machine are linked as part of Deleuze–Guattari’s project of *Schizoanalysis*. The concept of *Schizoanalysis* represents a way of thinking where the emphasis is on the primacy of “parts” or *schizzes* that work to displace the larger social forms, for example the

feminist thought with Elizabeth Grosz’s “A Thousand Tiny Sexes: Feminism and Rhizomatics” (1994) and Rosi Braidotti’s “Toward a New Nomadism: Feminist Deleuzian Tracks; or, Metaphysics and Metabolism” (1994) representing two obvious examples. See also Ian Buchanan and Claire Colebrook, eds. *Deleuze and Feminist Theory* (2000).

¹¹ What Buchanan terms “applied Deleuzism” (*Metacommentary* 93–191).

notion that life is governed by any fixed norm or image of the self. *Schizoanalysis* works through shifting the emphasis to a self in flux and becoming, rather than a self that has submitted to the law (Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* 5). Orlan provides an example of a self in flux which is using the bodies and connections drawn from Renaissance portraiture, cosmetic surgery procedures and multi-media technologies to create an-other or becoming self of her own design and purpose.

In order for the uninitiated reader to engage with these concepts as they relate to Orlan's project it is necessary to relinquish understandings based on either / or binary separations, where the subject is understood as an "entity" or thing, or as a binary relation between mind (interior) and body (exterior). Binary thinking or dualism constitutes the basis of Western metaphysical philosophy. Dualism is based on the belief that there are two mutually exclusive types of entities, for example body and mind, that work to compose the universe in general and subjectivity in particular. Metaphysical philosophy's insistence on the mind as superior to the body privileges the centrality of the mind, the psyche, the interior, consciousness and unconsciousness in conceptions of the subject (Grosz, *Volatile Bodies* vii). The impact of binary thought results in one category inevitably assuming a greater importance than the other, with the lesser status of the diminished or excluded category – for example woman – affirmed through cultural patterns and social behaviors. The privileging of patriarchy over matriarchy provides an obvious example with the specificity of women and their capacities submerged by male definition. The resulting cultural expectations of social, sexual and biological roles constitute a limitation for the female subject who is constrained within a narrower ambit of possibility or becoming than men.

In contrast to binary demarcations, Deleuze–Guattari’s conceptual schema needs to be understood as a series of flows, movements, capacities and provisional alignments. “Production” is elaborated by Deleuze–Guattari as those processes that create linkages and interrelations between fragments of bodies, and fragments of objects in a “machinic assemblage”. The problem is how should we understand the juxtaposition of these elements and to what end? Deleuze–Guattari’s concept of the “machinic assemblage” enables an understanding of life as a series of connection and proliferation linked together through *difference*. Rather than apprehending life from within the notion of a predetermined foundation, which works to ground or separate life from what it can do, the “machinic assemblage” enables life to be affirmed as an active, creative and eternally returning force.

An example of the machinic assemblage is the connections made in *Omnipresence* between Orlan’s incised skin, her intoning voice, the surgeon’s scalpel, and the mediating camera simultaneously relaying Orlan’s operation-performance to viewers in gallery locations around the world. This conjunction of disparate elements – or what Deleuze and Guattari term the *Body without Organs* – creates provisional alignments or “multiplicities” that do not *represent* the “real”, but *are* the “real”, constituting both an individual, a collective and a social reality, and a response to that reality. It is less useful to ask “What does Orlan’s work mean?” than to ask “How does it work?” The question of “How does it work” is superior and operates to avoid re-semiotising Orlan’s attempt to escape the Law of the sign. The recourse by spectators and critics in asking: “What does the work mean?” constitutes a re-oedipalising of Orlan’s attempt to escape the Law of the father. For Deleuze–Guattari:

We will never ask what a book (an assemblage) means ... [w]e will not look

for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed, and with what bodies without organs it makes its own converge. (*Plateaus* 4)

When the notion of the assemblage is applied to Orlan's art it enables an understanding of her work that is marked by experimentation rather than standardisation, producing ever new alignments that refuse closure or containment by organising systems. If it were possible to summarise the diversity of Orlan's work it could be said that she incarnates a disorder in the heart of metaphysical philosophy, decentring such reassuring touchstones as subjectivity and the binary systems of gender and identity. Orlan challenges the logic of a system which privileges form over matter, male over female. She spills and seeps beyond and outside the limited representation of female subjectivity. Counter-actualisation is a virtual operation in Deleuze–Guattari that Orlan attempts to make actual. Her project “counter-actualises”¹² the reality of the actual-lived-in female body. What Orlan does in effect, is isolate the social and physical components that constitute and work to ensure women's compliance with the production of Woman as Face, in order to express it again in her own way. The provocation of Orlan's art is her engagement in a corporeal art practice that actively creates a non-face. For the spectator, Orlan's strategy cannot be contained within linear and hierarchical understandings or what Deleuze–Guattari term *arborescent models* (*Plateaus*, 16). This results in hostile or ambivalent responses to Orlan's art, and these spectatorial responses will be explored throughout this project. Deleuze–Guattari's concepts act as a provocation to thought and will be put to work in order to interrogate the provocations of what it is to be and

¹² Counter-actualisation is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 1.

think, sustained through the corporeal affects and circulating images of *The Ultimate Masterpiece: The Reincarnation of St Orlan*.

The aim of this dissertation is to adapt Deleuze – while respecting the basic operating principle of an immanent critique – to my purposes of reading Orlan’s corporeal art. This is not a thesis on contemporary art, but rather a reading of the work of a contemporary artist through Deleuze, that necessarily entails more global comments. The modulation of Orlan’s art through a Deleuzian framework firstly reveals the potential of Deleuze’s thought for engagement with the processes of the production and reception of Orlan’s “Carnal Art”. Orlan’s *Carnal Art (L’Art Charnel) Manifesto* (1997) distinguishes her corporeal art from the body art movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Its key ideas include identity, refiguration, the body and the flesh, but also death and life, with its characteristics styles and genres including the baroque, the grotesque and parody. Secondly, the complexity of Orlan’s practice will be equated with the complexity of Deleuze’s philosophy.¹³ In setting up a journey through the texts of Deleuze and Deleuze–Guattari, a more satisfying reading is anticipated because the diversity of concepts developed by Deleuze–Guattari can be situated in and against Orlan’s art. This enables a sustained engagement with the multiple elements that constitute Orlan’s oeuvre. If Orlan is read differently, then by implication Deleuze and contemporary art practice can be understood differently. Therefore the intense reading of Orlan is at the same time an intense reading of contemporary art in general (this is the premise of Deleuze–Guattari’s becoming, which they say is always double).

¹³ “We do not look to Deleuze [s]imply to find the solutions to contemporary theoretical problems. More important, we enquire into his thought in order to [t]est our footing on a terrain where new grounds of philosophical and political thought are possible. What we ask of Deleuze, above all, is to teach us the contemporary possibilities of philosophy” (Hardt *Apprenticeship* xv).

My argument takes place in three stages, with each chapter modulating a *between-ness* that is a connecting part of the process. Chapter One “Corporeal” situates Orlan as concept-event intervening in and against the problem of a representational culture that portrays the body as ideal and seamless. Spinoza’s question “What can a body do?” informs this engagement with Orlan’s corporeal strategy. For Spinoza–Deleuze bodies are not defined by their genus or species, or by their organs, or the sum of their functions. Rather bodies are defined in terms of their *capacity* to enter into “relations of motion and rest”, a capacity that constitutes a *power* or *potential* “to affect or be affected” in relation to the body and to thought (Deleuze, *Spinoza* 123 – 124). For example Orlan’s corporeal experimentation and extensive relations with other bodies includes the body of art and the body of cosmetic modification and the body of digital and media technologies and the body of the spectator.¹⁴ Through the dissimulation of her facial features Orlan opens both herself and the spectator to the possibility of other connections and different understandings. Orlan’s project of “carnal art” represents a plane of experimentation that is mobile and dynamic. It works by provoking thought in relation to the potential for an-other way of understanding how the “rigid designator”¹⁵ *woman* is produced, in order to effect a double-becoming, through a potential “alliance”¹⁶ between Orlan and contemporary art:

Becoming is always double, that which one becomes no less than the one that becomes – a block is formed, essentially mobile, never in equilibrium.

(*Plateaus* 305)

¹⁴ Refer to Chapter One for a more detailed elaboration of Deleuze-Guattari’s use of the conjunction “and” in order to avoid subordination to the verb “to be”.

¹⁵ Saul Kripke evokes the notion of the “rigid designator” as a signifier which designates the same object “in all possible worlds.” Even if all positive properties were changed the “rigid designator” maintains the real kernel of the designated object. Therefore, despite the multiple elements of Orlan’s *Reincarnation* her designation remains the same (Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom* 91–92).

¹⁶ “Becoming is always of a different order than filiation. It concerns alliance” (*Plateaus* 238).

Chapter Two: “(In)Corporeal” engages with Deleuze–Guattari’s concepts of faciality and order-words. Orlan’s corporeal intentionality writes back or inverts order-words such as *glamour* and *beauty* that work to maintain the rigid designator *woman* within the constraints of the signifiatory system. This is evidenced by the power of order-words – a stronger variant of the “rigid designator” – to transform the status of a body through an attribution that effects an incorporeal transformation, for example: “She has a beautiful face”. Such attribution is affirmed through the realm of image-making machines including photography, advertising and film which circulate desired images to a global audience. Orlan’s dissimulation of facial features (*re*)*incarnates* a “subjectivity” unfamiliar to the Western socio-symbolic order. Orlan makes visible the banality of contemporary life. She brings the concept of identity and our confusion of image and self into focus, achieving defamiliarisation through a becoming-minor of the face.

Chapter Three: “(In)corporeal to Corporeal” engages with the finite-yet-infinite temporality of Orlan’s reincarnation, through her use of cinematic technologies that situate Orlan as a virtual entity. The limit-situation of Orlan’s unstable face can similarly be equated with an excess of power, which generates an “eye-pain” (*Anti-Oedipus* 189)¹⁷ for the viewer. Orlan’s combination of optics and sound, her intoning voice, her use of televisual and other imaging devices sustain their impact through a series of images that can be equated with Deleuze’s dual characterising of neo-realist cinema as involving both the politics and the event (*Time-Image* 19). Orlan’s mediatised performances are not intended to represent the world, but rather to make the world become. Therefore to speak of the meaning of her objects is a nonsense. It

¹⁷ See further discussion of “Eye-pain” in Chapter 3.

is the practice itself that one must grasp. She achieves this through making visible the wounding that women experience in order to become a woman, effecting a crack or a fracture within the “I” /eye of the viewer, in order to make the observer think. In a sense this is an enactment of Deleuze’s most important question: “What does it take to make us think?” – which is the flipside to asking “how does it work?”

The Conclusion: *Orlan and the Becoming of Art*, situates Orlan’s art as utopian through her resistance to habitual repetition. The conclusion considers how Orlan’s ontology of univocity relates to contemporary art’s ontology of the body. I argue that Orlan provokes contemporary art in relation to an unresolved paradox: the inclusion of alternate art and the exclusion of work that cannot be readily assimilated. I suggest that this paradox constitutes the heart of the uncomprehending response to Orlan’s *Reincarnation*. Three concrete rules for contemporary art are inferred from the recurring themes of commentators. These include the prevalence of psychoanalytic readings of Orlan’s art and the tendency to sensationalist reporting that trivialises Orlan’s corporeal practice. Finally the event of Orlan is aligned with a new aesthetic paradigm or *chaosmosis* which engages with the chaos of contemporary times to produce a non–face that reveals what it takes to become a woman, in order that a becoming–woman through difference and of difference can be realised.

Chapter One

Corporeal

“I think that the body is obsolete. It is no longer adequate for the current situation. [W]e are on the threshold of a world for which we are neither mentally nor physically ready.” (Orlan, “Conference” *This is my body...this is my software*)

“[Y]ou do not know beforehand what a mind or a body can do, in a given encounter, a given arrangement, a given combination.” (Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*)

“Of course, new concepts must relate to our problems, to our history, and, above all, to our becomings.” (Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*)

In this chapter I will consider the work of Orlan alongside some of the concepts of Deleuze–Guattari. I will situate Orlan as a concept–event through an art practice that uses the corporeality of her own body to intervene in and against the problem of a material body defined in terms of its biological, psychical and signifying organisation and organs. Spinoza’s question: “What can a body do?” will be used as an informing framework to enable an engagement with Orlan’s “carnal art”. The problem of a representational culture that portrays and endorses the rhetoric and images of idealised female beauty, and Orlan’s *counter-actualisation* of these elements, will also be considered.

Deleuze–Guattari define the philosophical project of the creation of concepts as an *intervention* in response to a problem or problematising force of life. In *What is*

Philosophy? Deleuze–Guattari situate new concepts as active and connective relating to our problems, our history, and our becomings (27). In their view the task of philosophy, through its creation of concepts, is to extract an event from things through engagement with everyday social and political reality. Philosophy and art are understood as having the potential to generate a creative response to life through the generation of concepts which “express” events, enabling us to become conscious of forces and processes at work in the present. Both philosophy and art achieve this potential via concepts and affects that make the familiar, unfamiliar or strange. The French performance artist Orlan achieves this estrangement at the level of affect ¹ through the most controversial of her contemporary art projects, her practice of radical immanence titled *The Ultimate Masterpiece: The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan*. Central to Orlan’s serial project is the utilisation of her own materiality through a corporeal practice of “strategic exactness” ² involving multiple operations on her body and facial features.³ Such exactness is crucial to enable Orlan’s acting on and enactment of the problem of the material and discursive practices that inscribe and produce bodies for the twenty-first century. Orlan’s strategy enables both an exploration of the conceptual arguments that constitute one part of the continuing debate on the body, and a provocative engagement in the production of an alternate and different body. Her practice reflects a shift from the abstract(ed) domain of theorising the body as either essence or biological substance, to using her own corporeality to counter-actualise a material body in actual terms. Orlan invites us to engage with the event of her radically altered body, and to

¹ Massumi equates intensity with affect, where intensity appears to be non-linear, disturbing the linear progress of the narrative present from past to future. “Intensity is the unassimilable” (*Parables* 26–27.) It is the unassimilable aspect of Orlan’s art that disconcerts and disorients spectators.

² This term is used by Jane Goodall in relation to Orlan’s corporeal practice (*An Order of Pure Decision: Un-Natural Selection in the Work of Stelarc and Orlan* 153).

³ Apart from an early procedure when liposuction was used to extract fat from Orlan’s thighs, the face has been the focus for all of Orlan’s surgical interventions.

imagine or think through the concept of an enlarged human agency and will that engages with and models Spinoza's question "What can body do?" Orlan shows how ideas or understandings about the body and identity can be challenged or transformed, through an encounter with her modified material body. Deleuze–Guattari remind us that "[a]ll concepts are connected to problems without which they would have no meaning and which themselves can only be isolated and understood as their solution emerges" (*Philosophy*, 16). Orlan when situated as a concept reconfigures the problem of the body as other than the sum of its physiological functions. Instead Orlan models a *trespass and violence*, through a surgically modified corporeality that reveals her body as greater than the sum of its capacities, whose affective register forces the viewer to think. It is her capacity for affecting thought that situates Orlan within a Deleuze-inflected Spinozist understanding of the body.

Spinoza defines the human body not in terms of its genus or species, or by its organs, or the sum of its functions. Rather bodies are defined in terms of what they can do; by their capacity for affects and relations to movement and rest. Spinoza's ethology works to disinvest rule-based moralities and offers an ethics of the molecular – "a micropolitics concerned with the 'in-between'⁴ of subjects, with that which passes between them and which manifests the range of possible becomings" (Gatens, "Spinozist Lens" 167). The significance of the *in-between* is that it signals the being *of*, the beginning of the potential for a new relation through Orlan's corporeal experimentation and extensive relations with other bodies including the body of art and

⁴ The *in-between* constitutes the being *of* the middle or the being of a relation. Massumi observes that for Deleuze the *in-between* represents an indispensable step toward conceptualising change as other than a negation, a subversion, a rupture or transgression – terms which have been applied to Orlan's oeuvre. That is, the in-between works as a term that is other than the already constituted, where the effect of the already-constituted is to negate the possibility for change or alternate thought (*Parables* 70.) Thus the notion of the in-between is immanent, rather than dialectical.

the body of cosmetic modification which constitutes an alignment with Spinoza's ethology.

Through positioning herself within a body of thought, specifically Renaissance art and its idealised representation of (what I will designate as) Woman as Face, Orlan functions as a *contaminator* of these problems in order to destabilise that body of thought. Orlan's intervention,⁵ through a series of operation-performances, constitutes an order of effectivity in response to the "given" of the culture of representation; a "given" that functions both as a problem and as a provocation to thinking. Provocations to thought are not to be experienced in everyday examples such as the weather, the dog or the family vacation. What is needed are encounters with examples of thinking in extreme forms such as art, malevolence or philosophy, for it is not the "[r]eassuring encounters with the known that should provide a paradigm of thinking, but the hesitant gestures which accompany our encounters with the unknown" (Patton *Deleuze, Critical Reader* 9). Such encounters shift us beyond our everyday frame of reference and thought. Deleuze comments that the subject of the Cartesian ego does not think: "it only has the possibility of thinking, and remains stupid at the heart of that possibility" (*Difference* 276). This constitutes Deleuze's reason for rejecting "possibility" in favour of virtuality.

The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan combines Baroque iconography, multi-media technologies, corporeal performances and mass communication networks in order to engage with the problem of our contemporary addiction to the Face, and the correlative production of Woman as Face. Each element of Orlan's corporeal project models the

⁵ *Intervention-Orlan* is the name given to the artist's manuscript translated by Tanya Ausburg and Michel Moos in 1995.

potential for an alternate becoming through a contemporary art practice which I will argue meets the essential criteria for distinguishing art from non-art - intentionality (strategic exactness) and transformation (becoming) (Rose, "Is It Art?" 87). For Deleuze–Guattari the process of becoming involves a virtual series of processes and movements outside of or beyond the constraints of subjectivity and fixed identity. The reve(a)lation of Orlan's disassembled face, as a recurring strategy of her *Reincarnation* project, is in the order of a counter-actualisation to the habitual repetition of everyday social and historical reality.

For Deleuze, history doesn't follow a time-line of sequential events and happenings: the dates and battles of an incumbent king and a war-lord usurper, where history is presented as an "unfolding development from a single viewpoint" (Colebrook *Gilles Deleuze* 8). Deleuze situates history as a sedimentation written from the point of view of the State apparatus. Due to history's failure to experiment, history constitutes a set of limiting conditions that make possible the experimentation of something that escapes history (*Philosophy?* 111). By intervening against a presumed familiar proposition such as the Face, making that proposition unfamiliar or untimely, Orlan is an example or a self-referential concept that escapes history, while simultaneously operating in and against the problems that history, and by implication the Socius, endorses.

Molar entities or precepts according to Deleuze–Guattari, are characterised by rigid segments contained within the operations of the State, where institutions and classes delimit the potential of individuals to become. In terms of feeling and relations, people, as part of the molar aggregate, are similarly segmented in order to maintain and stabilise an identity against and as part of cultural, political and economic systems

which circulate as elements within the globalisation of capitalist production and cultural exchange.⁶ Orlan, through her production of a non-face, “renders visible”⁷ the conditions and problem of molar identity through a socio-historical addiction to the signifying regime of Woman as Face, as both an enjoyed and desired image. This addiction is evidenced in late capitalism where the iconic status accorded to the beautiful Face is continually circulated through a diversity of imaging machines including photography, magazines and cinema. Such fantasy machines both produce and inscribe the rigid designator Woman as an effect of Face. Orlan’s double disengagement both away from the signifying regime as represented through Renaissance portraiture, and away from the molar entity woman “defined by her form, endowed with organs and functions and assigned as a subject” (*Plateaus* 275), makes visible the impact and consequences of facialisation as a particular problem for women. Through her corporeal strategy Orlan initiates what Deleuze–Guattari conceptualise as a desiring-machine,⁸ where desire operates as a force that is productive of reality. The machine works to reveal the potential of other becomings, not in a literal sense, but rather through the production of a virtual series of intensities that connect with other intensities outside of or beyond the molar forces of subjectivity and stable unity. Desire, when situated as a force of production, reverses the tradition reaching from Plato to Lacan which situates desire as ontological lack, a lack in being that strives to be filled through the impossible attainment of an object:

⁶ Hardt and Negri designate this “new global form of sovereign economy” as “Empire” (*Empire* xii).

⁷ This aphorism is taken from Paul Klee’s essay “Creative Credo” (Schöpferische Konfession), published in 1918: “Art does not render the visible; rather, it makes visible” (Read, *A Concise History of Modern Painting* 182). For Deleuze this constitutes the function of art.

⁸ Deleuze and Guattari’s initial concept “desiring-machine” was subsequently replaced by the term “assemblage” (Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues* 101).

Those who link desire to lack, the long column of crooners of castration, clearly indicate a long resentment, like an interminable bad conscience. Lack refers to a positivity of desire, and not the desire to a negativity of lack. (*Dialogues* 91)

For Deleuze–Guattari desire is immanent, positive and productive. The machine is used by Deleuze–Guattari to conceptualise a productive system that functions through associative breaks or what they term cuts (*coupures*) in “material flows” [where] “every machine is a machine of a machine, producing an interruption of the flow, insofar as it is connected to another machine that supposedly produces this flow” (*Anti-Oedipus* 36). The continuity of the material flow through the cutting of the machine is what constitutes its productivity. Malik’s (“Between Bodies Without Organs” 39) observation that machinic production is both materially and locally determined, is applicable to Orlan’s *Reincarnation*. Orlan effects an organic-technical machinic connection, both through the corporeal intensity (flow) of her own body, in conjunction with the surgical-machine, the imaging-machine, the art-machine and the spectator-machine, producing a “continuous, infinite flux” (*Anti-Oedipus* 39), across different registers of material flow, that constitute the “Schizz” of Deleuze–Guattari’s concept of “Schizoanalysis” (39). Orlan embodies the concept of the Schizz in her refusal to be governed by any fixed notion of the image of self. Rather she models a face in flux, a non-face assembled from Old Masters’ envisioning of the female face.

Orlan’s self-willed wounding confronts representational portraiture’s (en)visioning of the ideal female face – implicitly revealing the social and economic processes at work in the production of Woman as Face – creating what Deleuze refers to an “Event of Sense”. In Deleuzian terms sense has a peculiar and dynamic character involving the opening out of relations from interiority to surface. Such a move designates a mode of

individuality that is other than a thing or a subject, and refuses the attributes of and containment by organising elements of a representation system. Deleuze–Guattari call the concept *haecceity*,⁹ to designate this mode of individuality. Sense doesn't express what something is, but rather its power to become. Orlan transforms our understandings of what a Face can become through an artistic strategy of appropriating Renaissance images and incorporating them into her own features, to create a corporeal design actualised through surgical wounding that is both virtual and real. In other words, Orlan's Face actually is what it virtually seems. Orlan is a concept that "speaks the event not the essence or the thing" (*Philosophy?* 21). Orlan's creation of a (synthetic) proper name with its mythological, religious, cross-gendered and baroque associations is enacted as a corporeal terrain of shifting signifiers, marked by fluidity, impermanence, mobility and dissolution. Instead of designating a person Orlan marks an event, revealing the processes of becoming. A process described in Deleuze's equation: *haecceity* = event (*Dialogues* 92).

The conceptualisation of new events, in this instance Orlan's *Reincarnation*, enables an audience to become conscious of processes and forces at work in the present including the idealised representation and overcoding of Woman as Face, and its interconnection with the problem of what Guattari terms "capitalistic subjectivity" (*Chaosmosis* 91).¹⁰ In a sense Deleuze–Guattari's concept of affect is the presumption of a certain type of spectator. The spectator is an essential component of Orlan's art, in

⁹ "There is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing or substance. We reserve the name *haecceity* for it. A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or a subject. They are *haecceities* in the sense that they consist entirely of relations of movement and rest between molecules or particles, capacities to affect and be affected" (*Plateaus*, 261).

¹⁰ "It is in underground art that we find some of the most important cells of resistance against the steam-roller of capitalistic subjectivity – the subjectivity of one-dimensional, generalised equivalence, segregation and deafness to true alterity" (*Chaosmosis* 91).

that the face of the viewer is necessary for the affect of Orlan's face to spill onto the observer's face. Orlan provides the images that awaken the other in the spectator through playing out in her own body the drama at work in the social body. Her open-ended corporeality, connected with the surgeon's technical apparatus, confronts us from outside the subject positions we occupy, and the concepts we already have (of art, woman, face and gender). Orlan is an event of sense that both provides and provokes through unreasonable images that offer the power to transform life by revealing new lines or fissures in current ways of thinking and modes of existence.

Orlan's re-envisioned body impinges on us. The permeability of her skin, her viscous blood and the constant ostinato of textual excerpts¹¹ affects us. As Genevieve Lloyd reminds us, "each individual body exerts a causal force on others; and each is in turn constantly impinged on by others" (*Spinoza*, 55). This communication of motion between bodies is explained by Spinoza as *sensation*, where the surface of bodies is impinged on by other bodies. Orlan's body impinges on the spectator as an external body, where ideas that the spectator has about the external body indicate the condition of their own body rather than that of the external body (Lloyd, *Spinoza* 56). An encounter with Orlan's corporeal appropriation of images from the data bank of representational art, in conjunction with her negation of the autonomy of the subject, forces the spectator to think differently, through the sensation she creates and the forces she enables. Orlan can be situated within what Deleuze–Guattari conceptualise as nomadic culture. This enables shifts in location and fosters multiplicity and the

¹¹ Ince suggests that Orlan's deployment of selected texts before and during her surgical interventions works firstly to demarcate the theoretical and intellectual context of each performance-operation, which situates Orlan in an intellectual tradition, not in popular culture. Secondly, Orlan's use of texts emphasises consciousness, activity and detachment, demonstrating Orlan's agency (*Millennial* 114).

possibility of generating an *other* mode of thought, where being is summoned to exist differently through a utilisation of components including the corporeal, the technical, the verbal and the spatial. These elements constitute a larger-than-lifeness when situated in an interactive environment where the affect of Orlan is enhanced by the proliferation of her corporeal images through multi-media technologies, both within the surgical environment and via her physical presence in conference presentations. In these presentations Orlan's presence is counter-actualised – she is actually present, in front of virtually screened video images. Orlan through her virtual / actual presence in the conference or surgical environments offers information about her artistic projects and reads textual excerpts, but provides nothing in terms of interpretation. No meaning, no interpretation, no symbolism or metaphor is transmitted: only sensation, with its potential to unfold into a new possibility.

Orlan is a self-referential concept that brings about an encounter, through the connection of components, with different neighbourhoods (*voisinages*) on a plane of composition or consistency.¹² These neighbourhoods include the neighbourhood of the body, the neighbourhood of representational art and the reproduction of appearances, the neighbourhood of gendered woman, the neighbourhood of science through the medium of surgical intervention, the neighbourhood of texts and performance, and the neighbourhood of virtual transmission or scopic dominance that spirals away from the mutating image of Orlan's bleeding face. Orlan moves between two sets or terms, thinking via the conjunction AND instead of thinking IS. Such a strategy works

¹² Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between the plane of composition of art and the plane of immanence of philosophy. Each plane "can slip into each other to the degree that parts of one may be occupied by entities of the other" (*Philosophy?* 66), although each retains its own distinct and heterogenous status. This contrasts with their situating of the planes of composition, consistency and immanence as equivocal (*Plateaus* 266).

through refusing the encumbrance of the problem of being IS, and overcoming subordination to the verb TO BE, The AND actively creates a line of flight and gives relations another direction. Such a move works to nullify foundations, endings and beginnings, through making the encounter with relations penetrate and corrupt everything, which constitutes a refusal of the dialectic in favour of immanence, in order to “undermine being, [and] make it topple over”(*Dialogues* 56–59).

In her refusal of the centralised and compartmentalised forms of theoretical, scientific or representational bodies of knowledge, Orlan creates a *machinic assemblage* through establishing “connections between certain multiplicities drawn from each of these orders” (*Plateaus* 23, *Dialogues* 34). For Deleuze, what passes for identity is an assemblage that enables an anti-hierarchical way of conceiving of the subject, specifically against the State organisation of propriety and property. Guattari observes that one gets to know an assemblage not through representation, but through “affective contamination” (*Chaosmosis* 92) which can be equated with the notion of art as a virus. Orlan deterritorialises the boundaries of the body and of art through an assemblage consisting of: Orlan AND selected facial features AND morphed images AND the surgeon’s template AND her open-ended face AND the surgical environment AND virtual transmission AND the spectator’s response AND corporeal installations AND alternate naming AND contemporary art AND the critical response. This still leaves open the problem of “consistency” and the question; “what gives this group of connections sufficient internal consistency to equal art?” This synthesis of heterogeneous elements is only “defined by the degree of consistency that makes it possible to distinguish the disparate elements constituting that aggregate (discernibility)” (*Plateaus*, 344).

It is only when objective content and subjective forms have collapsed, that the work of art reveals its full meaning, through the functioning of its singular elements. It is through acting on and against these paradigms, Orlan struggles, and I would suggest succeeds, in creating an alternate self, which is not defined by an identity but by a process of becoming through an immanent process of production and creation. Each neighbourhood or zone encounters the other, and the affects which pass between them manifest a range of “becomings” that move beyond identity and subjectivity. The virtual simultaneity of Orlan’s becoming – its neither here, nor not here attributes – designates becoming as virtual, taking place in a pure form of time adjacent to passing time, where becoming refers to the intensity of the attribute, not its specific characteristics. Through her engagement in a process of self-invention or “realisation of autonomy” which Guattari terms *autopoeisis* (*Chaosmosis* 7), Orlan is engaged in the creation of a non-self, through a corporeal art practice that does not submit to the law of conjugality.¹³

Orlan’s dissimulation of her facial features empties out the place of the object, resulting in collapses of the structures of representation. Orlan opposes any notion of oneness, and creates an isomorphic disjuncture where nothing fits, opening herself to other connections and possibilities on the plane of composition moving her art toward attaining what Deleuze and Guattari term *The Body without Organs* (BwO). Deleuze–Guattari develop (via Artaud) the concept of the BwO as a purely virtual intensive body that traverses the organism, and is immanent to it. Deleuze situates the BwO as the model of life itself. Given that Orlan is actively using her own materiality, generating a series of intensive states that work to disinvest the notion of a logical identity, then the

¹³ “I am a man, you are a woman; you are a telegraphist, I am a grocer; you count words, I weigh things, our segments fit together, conjugate” (*Plateaus* 195). Deleuze-Guattari distinguish between the line of segmentarity, the line of molecularity and the line of flight.

physical disintegration of the organic or organised body is a correlate to her *Reincarnation*. This move acknowledges the risk for the artist, of destratifying to a point of non-production where circulating intensities, which constitute the energy necessary for an alternate becoming, are blocked.

Through her corporeal art Orlan reveals the process of her becoming, by generating a series of images that work to denaturalise or invert the binary divisions imposed on the body by mind / body, nature / culture, subject / object and interior / exterior – oppositions that pervade Western thought. Orlan's performance at the Institute of Contemporary Art in London titled "Woman with Head" (1996)¹⁴ inverted the metaphysical opposition of body to mind. Working in collaboration with magician Paul Kieve and video artist Dean Bramnagann, techniques of illusion were used to situate Orlan's disembodied head alone onto a table, where it read texts familiar from her operation-performances. Video images of her head from previous works – front, back and inverted – were rapidly projected onto a white screen at the back of the performance space (Ince, *Millennial* 87). Orlan's emphasis on the pairing woman / head worked to invert the coded meanings associated with male intelligence and rational thought, and the female body understood as other to rational thought.

The event of Orlan is not the existing state of affairs. She is actualised in the state of affairs through the virtuality of her body and her lived performance. When Orlan's deterritorialised images are circulated to a world-wide global audience, they are perceived as virtual objects, realised in the actual state of affairs (of history, of art and religion) that work to sustain the rigid designator woman and the attributes of gender.

¹⁴ "Woman with Head" (1996), performance at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, London, with magician Paul Kieve, video artist Dean Bramnagann and musician Robin Rambau, April 1996.

She models the painful reality of becoming a woman as inscribed by these containing and limiting representational systems. Orlan's challenge to thought – and in a sense she reveals that this is the challenge we all face – is the creation of concepts that are equal to her as event “[n]ot as representations or formalisations, but as [a creation] enabling new events, new questions and new possibilities” (Colebrook, *Deleuze and Feminist Theory* 14). Orlan uses her own materiality to enact an incorporeal event, by producing an alternate body that affects us and confrontationally models the question “What can a body do?”

1.1 What Can A Body Do?

“We do not know what the body can do.” For Deleuze this declaration of ignorance exists as a provocation:

We speak of consciousness and its decrees, of the will and its effects, of the thousand ways of moving the body, of dominating the body and the passions – *but we do not even know what a body can do.* Lacking this knowledge, we engage in idle talk. (Deleuze, *Spinoza*, 17–18)

Spinoza's conception of the human body is that of an ethological force: a force characterised by relations of speed and slowness, and the capacities for affecting and being affected that characterise each thing (Deleuze, *Spinoza*, 125). Spinoza's ethology moves the body beyond the dominant conception as a unitary, fixed and predominantly physiological reality. Ethology does not disavow the organs, but rather selects out the transcendental organisation of the body's organs in favour of a consistency of composition or a harmonic of bodies and their exchanges. If we are Spinozists, comments Deleuze:

We will not define a thing by its form, nor by its organs and functions, nor as a subject...A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; its can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity. (*Spinoza* 127)

Spinoza's ethology, as Deleuze presents it, provides an analytic model that enables both a thinking through of what Orlan's *Reincarnation* project produces, and of her strategic engagement with problems of the body and binary thought which situate the body as "other" to the centrality of mind. By appropriating and surgically inscribing selected features from Old Masters' images of idealised beauty into her own flesh, Orlan denies the presumption of identity through corporeally transforming the representation of woman via a series of surface effects that work to displace notions of depth and interiority. She actively lives Spinoza's axiom that the body is an intensity of forces, capable of affects that move through the world connecting with and being affected by other bodies – both hers and ours. This is not restricted to encounters with material bodies, but extends to other bodies populating the plane of composition, such as the body of art, the body of medical technology, the socio-cultural body and the gendered body.

Orlan's body makes visible the forces which produce both the perfected body of classical art and the traumatised body of medical and psychiatric procedures and institutions. Her body represents the capacity and the desire to form new relations and generate numerous affects of becoming, which Deleuze–Guattari define as a machinic assemblage; an intermingling, reactive assemblage¹⁵ of bodies (*Plateaus*, 88). Instead

¹⁵ The assemblage is tetravalent, in that four aspects define its horizontal (content and expression) and vertical axes (territorialised and deterritorialised aspects) (*Plateaus* 88).

of aligning desire with fantasy and opposing it to the real as psychoanalysis does, Deleuze defines desire as producing the real, instead of a yearning. For Deleuze desire is primary, given rather than lacking. Desire is a set of practices, productive of reality. “If desire produces, its product is real. If desire is productive, it can be productive only in the real world and can produce only reality” (*Anti-Oedipus* 26). Desire is production that experiments and makes.

Orlan uses her materiality to produce an assemblage from the terrain of her own body, starting with the assemblages that produced her. She affirms Deleuze’s view that art is essentially productive, and that “[t]he work of art is a machine for producing or generating certain effects, certain signs, by determinable procedures” (Smith, *Critical and Clinical*, xxi). Each of Orlan’s “determinable procedures” has its own style incorporating the plastic surgery-machine, the computer-machine, the performance-machine, the art-machine, the mass-communication machine, the language-machine and the woman-machine. She makes one multiplicity pass into another, despite the difficulty of making the non-homogenous milieus of art, body, gender, technology and the observer converge (*Dialogues*, 52). It is the “calculated sobriety”¹⁶ (*Plateaus* 344), of Orlan’s corporeal strategy – her decoding, incorporation and subsequent deterritorialising of disparate elements which constitute the assemblage of her *Reincarnation* – that generates the circulation and resonance of these elements.

1.2 The Spectator

The event of Orlan cannot be actualised without the existence of and interaction with a global audience, for as Deleuze reminds us, the event is “[a]lways produced by bodies

¹⁶ Deleuze–Guattari use this term in relation to the disparate elements that constitute an assemblage: “The *sobriety* of the assemblages is what makes for the richness of the Machine’s effects” (*Plateaus*, 344).

which collide, lacerate each other or interpenetrate” (*Dialogues*, 64). Spectators aren’t sure how to react, for the event of Orlan, the emptying out of her object face, is both terrible and spectacular. It is both virtual and real, life and death, both a corporeal and incorporeal phenomena, with each of these elements perceived as an interaction of intensity and extensivity rather than dualistic separations. The event of Orlan incorporates the attributes of bodies, the interaction of camera and lighting crew, medical equipment and technology and the immaterial realm of video transmission, while remaining irreducible to these elements alone.

Each observer encountering Orlan is an element in a machinic assemblage, one that both constitutes her and is constituted by her. Many spectators when encountering Orlan, react with horror or shock on entering into a plane of composition – or the plane of immanence that is Orlan’s art – that is “no longer that of words, in a matter that is no longer that of forms, in an affectability that is no longer that of subjects” (*Plateaus* 258). They refuse the capacity to enter into, or form new relations with, the other-ness of thought that is Orlan’s body. The sense of discomfiture or horror Orlan’s body elicits, accompanied by a refusal to relinquish an idea of the foundational is-ness of the body in favour of an engagement with the question of “what a body can do?” – which prompts the question: “why don’t people ask this question?” – generates the negative and uncomprehending responses to Orlan’s corporeality. Most observers and commentators pose the wrong question. For Deleuze the question posed by desire is not “What does it mean?” but rather “How does it work?” (*Anti-Oedipus* 109). In a paraphrasing of Deleuze’s formulation, the question becomes not what does Orlan’s *Reincarnation* mean? – a formulation that results in a constant spiralling without

resolution – but rather how does the multiplicity inherent in Orlan’s *Reincarnation* work?:

How do these machines, these desiring-machines, work – yours and mine?

How do they pass from one body to another? How are they attached to the body without organs? (109).

Whether encountered in actual or virtual form, Orlan’s art has the capacity to affect more than the cerebral register. Rather than dismiss her work “as the antics of a mad woman” (Hirschhorn, “body as ready (to be re-)made” 112), Orlan’s *Reincarnation* challenges the viewer to find ways to look long enough to gain insight into the complex psychic, social, medical and imagistic constructs that either constitute, or work in the service of maintaining, the foundation or assurance of identity. As Orlan comments in *Conference*, “it is a question of not letting yourself be affected by the images, and of continuing to reflect upon what is behind them” (84). Orlan has to be apprehended in both actual and virtual terms; Deleuze’s theory demands it. For instance, the virtual / actual couple provides a superior binary to that of the real and imaginary. Her body is surgically altered, her corporeal excess is used for gallery installations and sold to finance the next surgical intervention. Her corporeality is actual as evidenced by the post-operative corporeal materials included in the 20 grams of subcutaneous fat used in the reliquary sequence titled *the text, my flesh and the languages* (1993) and the blood-stained gauzes featured in the *blood and photo transfer on gauze* reliquary (1993). Conversely her images from the *Reincarnation* series were transmitted via satellite technology to a worldwide audience in real time. In Orlan’s *Reincarnation* both actual and virtual are apprehended at the same time and both have the capacity to affect, not through the recognition of constituted subjects, but through the Spinozist mechanism of affective identification, through the intermixture of partial effects, where one “passion”

echoes another, reinforcing its intensity, by a process of what Deleuze–Guattari term desire as production (*Anti-Oedipus*37). The double-becoming process means that Orlan can be designated as both an actualised virtual and a virtualised actual. In *The Time-Image* Deleuze presents the concept of the crystal-image to indicate that:

It is the virtual image which corresponds to a particular actual image, instead of being actualised, of having to be actualised in a *different* actual image. It is an actual-virtual image on the spot, and not an actualisation of the virtual in accordance with a shifting actual. It is a crystal-image, and not an organic image.

(80)

By using her actual materiality Orlan produces a virtual entity that is infinitely rich in possibilities and infinitely enrichable through creative processes (Guattari, *Chaosmosis* 112). Each stage of Orlan's *Reincarnation* consists of an interim series or a work in progress that suspends closure on Orlan's becoming, while sustaining her actual / virtual presence through the continual circulation of relics (vials of blood), corporeal artefacts such as the *Finger Drawing in Blood* sequence (1993), public appearances and on-line image banks. The audience, as a constituent part of Orlan's machinic assemblage, encounters Orlan's corporeal dissolution as a bloc of sensation, which embraces multiplicity, and undoes enculturation, specifically the grounding frame of woman. She is the visible still attached to the invisible, form still mixed with the unformed. She is an overwhelming spectacle. The spectator does not re-emerge from an engagement with Orlan identical to their former self. They are learning. They are

becoming.¹⁷ Orlan is a becoming-concept situated in social, institutional and mythic space that cannot be contained within a subject's existing point of view.

By her wilful crafting and sculpting of the self, Orlan challenges and deterritorialises our thinking in relation to notions of the self and identity, forcing it to scatter and realign. Orlan's corporeal multiplicity, composed of a series of discontinuities, opposes the notion of unity or oneness. She embodies an immanent subjectivity, understood as a series of flows,¹⁸ energies, movements and capacities, a series of fragments and segments linked together in ways other than those that congeal into an identity. Orlan's looming face stimulates an encounter and a symbiosis with and among her global audience, appearing:

[a]s neither subject nor object but as a something that is very different: a possible world, the possibility of a frightening world. (*Philosophy?* 17)

This "frightening world" can be translated into a series of questions provoked by Orlan's art: questions concerning identity, the mind/body dualism, physical pain, the opening of the body, the medical colonisation of women's bodies, the ideals of feminine beauty, gender, Woman as Face, the relationship between women and technology, and the limits of art and language. Orlan experiments with many of these elements, refusing to offer the security of standardisation by relinquishing old connections, while producing ever-new alignments and linkages. Orlan, as a contaminator of the tradition of the humanist paradigm, effectively situates herself

¹⁷ This last section is paraphrased from François Zourabichvili's "Six Notes on the Percept (On the relation between the Critical and the Clinical" 192) in Paul Patton (ed) *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* (1996).

¹⁸ See Ian Buchanan's discussion on apprehending the affectivity of flow including blood, shit and semen, and Deleuze's synthesis of flow into modes, each connected with the production of desire (*Metacommentary* 22–26).

within that body of thought in order to disorganise that body. The problem remains how we can adjust our thinking to accommodate such a destabilisation. Deleuze–Guattari’s “notorious concept”¹⁹ of the Body without Organs (BwO) provides a problematic possibility

1.3 The Body without Organs

In a 1994 presentation titled *Intervention-Orlan*, Orlan mentions basing one of her operation-performances on a text by Antonin Artaud²⁰ who dreamed of a Body without Organs as an immanent response to the system of the *Judgement of God*.²¹ Artaud’s obsession with the body, that gave “the impression of a man attempting to step out of his own skin” (Sontag, *Introduction: Antonin Artaud* lii), is developed by Deleuze–Guattari into a formulation of the Body without Organs (BwO), where the enemy is not the organs, but the organisation of the organs into an organism (*Plateaus* 158). The BwO is a production of the desiring-machine “that speaks to the totality of the system of associative breaks while remaining immanent to them” (Malik “Between Bodies Without Organs and Machines Without Desire” 39). The BwO provides an invocation against the three great strata that most directly bind us: the organism, significance and subjectification:

You will be organised you will be an organism you will articulate your body – otherwise you’re just depraved. You will be signifier and signified, interpreter and interpreted – otherwise you’re just a deviant. You will be a subject, nailed

¹⁹ Referred to by Daniel W. Smith in his Introduction to *Critical and Clinical*, xxxvii.

²⁰ The textual excerpt is Artaud’s reference to fifty poets and his enumeration of how many times these poets must have defecated, washed, and urinated and how many hours were given to eating, sleeping and washing. Artaud concludes that these bodily functions were disproportionate to their “magical production” of poetry.

²¹ Artaud’s “To Have Done With the Judgement of God” was commissioned by French radio, and then banned on the eve of its projected broadcast in February 1948. Artaud was still revising the text a month later when he died. (Sontag, *Introduction: Antonin Artaud* lii).

down as one, a subject of the enunciation, recoiled into a subject of the statement – otherwise you're just a tramp. (*Plateaus*, 159)

In Deleuze–Guattari's formulation, the BwO is understood as a milieu of intensity beneath or adjacent to the organism, continually in the process of constructing itself. Disinvested of fantasy, images, projections and representations, it is a body without a psychical or secret interior. The immanence or adjacency of the BwO to organising systems means that it invokes the totality of these systems without totalising them in transcendental or dialectical ways. When applied to Orlan it becomes evident that through her use of cosmetic surgery she is engaged in a double, yet simultaneous movement in the realms of actuality and virtuality. She manifests Deleuze–Guattari's conception of the BwO that does not oppose or reject organs but is opposed to the organisation of bodies as they are stratified, regulated and ordered. Her BwO is a consequence of such organisation. What Orlan is doing through her surgical intervention can be seen as an attempt to dismantle the confining organisation of the self through a radical disarticulation of the organism and the systems that produce it.

For Deleuze–Guattari dismantling the organism does not mean killing yourself, although that is a risk. Caution is required. Any opening of the body enables connections of intensity that presuppose an entire assemblage. They contend that dismantling the organism is no more difficult than dismantling the two strata of signification and subjectification:

Tearing the conscious away from the subject in order to make it a means of exploration, tearing the unconscious away from significance and interpretation in order to make it a veritable production: this is assuredly no more or less difficult

than tearing the body away from the organism. Caution is the art common to all three. (160)

Orlan actively takes the concept of the body as a confining stratum of the assemblage and destratifies it. Deleuze–Guattari, in conceptualising the set of practices they term the BwO, distinguish between two kinds of anorganic Body without Organs,²² which also suggest an implicit “ethics” of the BwO. Firstly, the emptied BwO exemplified by the schizo body, the masochist body, and the drug-addicted body wildly destratifying to the point of blank: “What happened? Were you cautious enough?” (*Plateaus* 150) The second kind is designated by Deleuze–Guattari as the full BwO in and through which intensities circulate and flow, resulting in power, energy and production. Deleuze–Guattari also offer a formula, (a course guide) for attaining the BwO, in order to avoid the dangers of self-destruction through a too sudden destratification, where blocked intensities fail to circulate ending in annihilation.

This is how it should be done. Lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialisation, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flow conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times. (*Plateaus*, 161)

Orlan lodges herself on the stratum of representational art and medical technology. The opportunity this presents is her appropriation of selected images and the alternate construction of these images through surgical intervention, using computer generated templates. Orlan’s appropriation confirms Deleuze–Guattari’s description of

²² The distinction between two kinds of anorganic BwO (in favour of a series of intensities that deny the organic organisation of the body) differentiates the concept from all possible bodies of thought alongside which the BwO operates in adjacency. The BwO’s includes the potential to generate disequilibrium within and across established systems and structures.

“appropriation” (in relation to Artaud) as “the necessary effort to think” (Buchanan, *Deleuzian Century* 107). Orlan’s appropriation can be aligned with self-agency, in that she takes and puts to use selected elements of Renaissance portraits to self-fashion a subjectivity of her own making, which breaks with or *transcends* the given, constituted by social structures and regulatory bodies that both shape culture and cultural commodities (107). Orlan simultaneously makes visible the processes that produce Woman as Face, while transcending that designation. Orlan’s appropriation constitutes a path to freedom, and her self-agency accords with Deleuze’s formulation of the transcendental empirical subject, which is both produced by existing social systems and productive of an-other way of perceiving the impact of such systems, and which creates the potential for generating an-other body of thought.

Through the circulation of its affect the BwO simultaneously hovers at the interface of the pathological, and that which connects and becomes. The question is how can Orlan avoid *botching* her BwO – with its implicit dangers of disfigurement, death or irrelevance – so that each assemblage including subjectivity, identity, gender and Woman as Face is disarticulated, experimented with, and continually circulated on the plateau of intensity? To avoid the black hole of annihilation she needs to maintain small supplies of significance and subjectification. Orlan is experimenting with the capacity of her body to be affected, and conversely for her body to affect the bodies of others, through creating a milieu of intensity “beneath” or “adjacent to” the organism and organising systems, in order to bring about an alternate process of thought. Orlan’s adjacencies include: a series of Renaissance portraits / the cultural moment of the gaze; particular texts / surgical interventions; facial surgery / virtual images; the spectator / visual images; language / the spectator; the BwO / discursive systems. Through the

disequilibrium created by Orlan's actual dissolution, she effects an abstract machine of faciality, that will be discussed in the next chapter.

Conversely, the BwO is situated at the edge or limit of engagement with the pathological, and madness is a correlative of the concept. Smith (*Critical and Clinical* xxxix) attributes the delirium of artists – including the writers Artaud, Pound and Rimbaud and the philosopher Nietzsche – to madness rather than “kernels of art”. These artists (with the exception of Pound) provide inaugurating conceptual frameworks subsequently developed by Deleuze–Guattari. Similarly, it has been claimed that Orlan is mad, and a whole issue of a French medical journal ²³ has been dedicated to exploring the issue of her mental stability. Michel Onfray's list of accusations of pathological madness or error that have been attributed to Orlan's *Reincarnation* includes:

Megalomania, delusions of grandeur, histrionics, mystical delirium, self-mutilation, depersonalisation, fetishism, activism, narcissism, masochism, hysteria, schizophrenia, paranoia, perversion... Oh God, oh Sigmund, what a litany of sins. (“Surgical Aesthetics” 35)

Antipathetic responses both to the Body without Organs and to Orlan's corporeal art indicate the failure of discursive systems to accommodate Orlan's practice, and the potential of the BwO to stimulate thought. As Buchanan comments, Deleuze–Guattari's reconfiguring of the body as the sum of its capacities enables an opening “[f]or cultural analysts to think these practices of self [in this instance Orlan] for themselves, instead of interpreting them according to the dictates of a previously stipulated clinical

²³ “Expertise psychiatrique d'une oeuvre d'art Orlan”. VST: *Revue scientifique et culturelle de santé mentale* 23–24, sept-déc 1991, 43–5, p. 44.

condition” (*The Problem of the Body* 75). Conversely the litany of madness listed earlier could be applied to the body of discursive systems themselves, for the BwO extends beyond the organic body to the body of stratifying systems including art, medicine and psychoanalysis. In other words the counter-actualisation of the body as a BwO – the anorganism of the body – is inseparable from molar systems or hermeneutic imperatives that produce through a process of stratification. Orlan, through the wilful mutation of her body in the surgical environment, is striving for a limit or tendency: to discover both the possibilities of what her body and what stratifying systems, in terms of shifts and realignments can do. Her strategic engagement with the surgical environment in order to discover that limit is fraught with danger. It is confronting and shocking. She risks spilling across and into the pathological, she risks botching her BwO, but she does it because she desires to experiment with intensities and her affective capacity. Through confronting the problem of representational art’s idealised and fantasised portrayal of women, Orlan is actually engaged in a process of losing face. Flieger comments that “[t]o undo this identification with the central face of the majoritarian, one has to first decenter ‘oneself’, become unwound, strung out, ‘minoritarian’, de-faced: becoming woman is the first shift, destabilizing the conventions of the Total” (“Becoming Woman: Deleuze, Schreber and Molecular Identification” 46). Orlan disinvests the notion of becoming a woman, as an implied requirement of signification, replacing it with becoming-woman as a deterritorialisation of the organising signification. She achieves this through a corporeal process that renders visible the twin process as the painful reality of becoming a woman, adjacent to the virtuality of becoming-woman.

The self-invention explicitly thematised in Orlan’s work re-presents the effort to be born anew as a kind of female subject that has never existed, or not existed since a pre-

patriarchal era. It is aligned with Deleuze–Guattari’s philosophy of transcendent ethics informed by concepts of becoming. Through the scope and impact of her *Reincarnation* Orlan models the unbearableness of the limited choices that society forces women to make. Orlan’s becoming-woman literally models in blood and flesh the reality of what it takes to become a woman, which we would not otherwise see. Much of the finite-yet-infinite elements of Orlan’s work are performed in the interstices or shadow of logocentric representation – subjectivity and identity – that are constructed and presumed by processes of socialisation, codification and juridical requirements. This is not to suggest that women experience the extremes associated with Orlan’s re-invention. Rather she provides the images that oppose the State’s discursive apparatus of closure and conformity, in order to provoke thought to an alternate visioning in terms of the shape and potential of what it is possible for women to become, if freed from the constraints of the signifying system.

1.4 The Event of Orlan

For Deleuze–Guattari the task of philosophy when it creates concepts is to extract an event from things, in order to affirm a new event. Colebrook comments that “events are the singularities of existence, moments of sense that exceed already constituted concepts but which open the problems that the concept will answer” (“Is Sexual Difference a Problem?” 114). The challenge for philosophy and the possibility for art is to create concepts (and percepts) that are equal to the event, as creations that work within the events of social and historical reality to enable new events, questions and possibilities (114). This aim can be similarly applied to Orlan, who through her corporeal-surgical art practice works to expose the event, as opposed to the catatonic unfolding of history, through revealing the corporeal consequences of attributed gender that designate Woman as Face. The event of Orlan is shaped by the events that shaped

her. This means that while Orlan is actualised through the events that shaped her, it is through her *Reincarnation* series that Orlan effects a counter- actualisation of these events. The paradox of Orlan as performer – Deleuze refers to “actor” (*Logic of Sense* 150) – is that while Orlan represents, what she represents is always still in the future, and already in the past (150). Orlan actualises the events that constituted her, the event of Woman as Face, but in a way that totally differs from the actualisation of the event in the depth (interior) of things. The performer Orlan delimits the original event – Woman as Face – and disengages from it an abstract line, retaining from the originary event “its contour and its splendour” (150). Orlan becomes the performer of her own events, *a counter- actualisation*. Through the process of her *counter-actualisation* Orlan creates an event of sense. “Sense” as discovered by the Stoics is “the expressed of the proposition, an incorporeal, complex and irreducible entity at the surface of things, a pure event which inheres or subsists in the proposition” (*Logic of Sense* 19). This means that when Orlan is situated as “sense” she cannot be reduced or contained within “individual states of affairs, particular images, personal beliefs, and universal or general concepts” (19). Such irreducibility constitutes a problem for spectators and commentators, contributing to their uncomprehending responses in relation to Orlan’s *Reincarnation*. The event of Orlan’s surgically de-constructed corporeality, in conjunction with her circulating virtual images, works to make visible the process that is the reality of becoming a woman, a reality actually constructed in flesh. Orlan commits *trespass and violence* around current subjectivities moving across the terrain of the Face, deterritorialising each constituent feature to create an alternate Face of her own design and purpose. Orlan cannot be contained within the proposition “Face”, rather as an event of sense she reveals the power of “Faceness”, showing that the Face is not a given at all, but is imposed on us. Her strategies of surgical intervention, virtual

transmission, corporeal artefacts and photographic installations are integral to her actualisation as a non-Face event.

Deleuze–Guattari’s use of the Stoic conception of the event allows a redescription of the relationship between language and the world in terms of effectivity rather than representation. Language, when expressing or enabling an incorporeal transformation, does not represent the world, but acts upon it or intervenes in certain ways. Deleuze–Guattari employ the concept of *incorporeal transformation* in order to describe the change in status of a body, or the change in its relations to other bodies, which occurs when subject to a new description (*Plateaus* 80 – 81). It is this process that Orlan “renders visible” in her *Reincarnation* series. Incorporeal transformation involves both the expressed of order-words and the attributes of bodies, and implies both actual and virtual components. For example, while the word is attributed in actual terms through the delivery of a statement, the person receiving the statement or attribution is incorporeally transformed in virtual terms, with an active effect; a judge declares a defendant guilty; a woman is declared to be beautiful. When applied to the concept of *incorporeal transformation* the attribution of an order-word such as *glamour* implies the attribution of a virtual word that is simultaneously actualised in terms of both an incorporeal transformation and corporeal impact. Individuals receiving this word can visualise or imagine a space where both actual and virtual images co-exist and can therefore be said to enact their lives on the basis of the power of the false.

Glamour is an event that occurs simultaneously with the articulation of the order-word. If one person calls another person *glamorous* it is an instance of an incorporeal transformation. For the person receiving the attribution Deleuze observes that “the incorporeal transformation is recognisable by its instantaneousness, its immediacy by

the simultaneity of the statement of expressing the transformation and the effect the transformation produces” (*Plateaus* 81). What occurs is an incorporeal shift, perhaps in terms of an increased self-apprehension of status or value – which is virtual – due to the positive associations of the word *glamour*. For an incorporeal transformation is doubly constituted through the expressed of the order-word and the attributes of bodies.

Roland Barthes’ essay “The Face of Garbo” provides an insight into the potential for incorporeal transformation experienced by a film audience looking onto the face of Garbo where:

The name given to her, *the Divine*, probably aimed to convey less a superlative state of beauty than the essence of her corporeal person descended from a heaven where all things are formed and perfected in the clearest light (*A Roland Barthes Reader* 83).

The event of Garbo subsists in the appellation *the Divine* which expresses it, while simultaneously happening to things and beings at the surface of her body and outside of being (*Logic of Sense* 34). Deleuze’s formulation can be applied to a film audience, who when viewing the event of Garbo, may experience a sense or feeling described by Deleuze as a state where “nothing happens, and yet everything changes” (*Philosophy?* 158). Conversely an order-word such as *glamour*, *face* or *woman* constitutes a problem for artists in terms of how to avoid or divert the stratifying and containing potential of these order-words – Artaud’s “Judgement of God” or Kafka’s “little death sentence” (*Plateaus*, 76). Orlan in her “Carnal Art Manifesto” ceases to deal with the “Judgement of God”. She uses her body to work against the order-words through both refusal and reversal, inverting the word against itself, so that order-words are disinvested of their signifiatory power.

1.5 Skin

Deleuze's double formulation of the event is also evident through Orlan's continual use of a text on the deceptiveness of skin. This provides an example of the shift to an incorporeal transformation constituted through an interaction of the expressed of the order-word (skin) and the attributes of bodies (Orlan, the spectator and the body of art).

At the beginning of each of her operation-performances Orlan reads from a psychoanalytic text, *La Robe* by Eugénie Lemoine-Luccioni, which describes the skin as deceptive.

Skin is deceiving...in life one only has one's skin... there is a bad exchange in human relations because one never is what one has, and there are no exceptions to the rule. I have the skin of an angel, but I am a jackal...the skin of a crocodile, but I am a puppy, the skin of a black person, but I am white, the skin of a woman, but I am a man; I never have the skin of what I am. (Orlan *Conference* 88)

The skin plays a significant role in Orlan's series of corporeal modifications. Skin is the site of forces of intensity, invoking notions of a border between the me – “*I never have the skin of what I am*” and the non-me – “*One never is what one has*”. These words deny the metaphysical understanding of the skin as the container or envelope for an inner domain of the soul, or a “reflection of our well-or ill-being and a mirror to the soul” (Didier Anzieu, *The Skin Ego* 17). It is the real-ness of Orlan's skin being surgically incised or cut that denies both the attribution of metaphor, and the Freudian dialectic that the surface constitutes an internal projection of something else. That is, the ego has a psychical surface produced through a relationship with another bodily surface, with the other conversely constituted by an internal representation of an external surface. Skin sensations are therefore projected and recorded onto the surface

of the psychical apparatus; the projections coinciding with the moment that both psychical and bodily ego are differentiated at an operative level (Morra, *Rauschenberg's Skin* 53).

Contrasting with Freud's conception of ego-formation, the effect of Orlan's continued usage of Lemoine-Luccioni's skin excerpt, insists that all her surgical interventions occur at the surface or the outside, with the event of Orlan being beyond or other than the appearance of "*what one has*." Orlan's intervention simultaneously uses the procedures of word and wound to effect her corporeal transformation. That is, she uses her corporeality to enact an incorporeal event. She is literally cut, and the reality of her wound is apprehended by a worldwide audience. This co-incides with Émile Bréhier's apprehension of Stoic thought:

When the scalpel cuts through the flesh, the first body produces upon the second not a new property but a new attribute, that of being cut. The *attribute* does not designate any real *quality*...it is, to the contrary always expressed by the verb, which means that it is not a being, but a way of being (cited in *Logic of Sense* 5).

Similarly for Orlan the attribute of skin is not expressed as an order-word, which implies materiality and incorporation into the signifying or metaphoric system, but rather "skin-ness", with the "ness" comprising the essence of the word. This attribution enables an understanding of the event of Orlan, not as an individuated "I", but rather as a way of being or becoming. Becomings are always specific forms of motion and rest, speed and slowness, points and flows of intensity. Orlan, through transforming the materiality of her own face, is moving toward an alternate materiality. At the point of intersection between the surgeon's scalpel, the flapped back skin and Orlan's intoning voice lies the event of Orlan. Through transforming the materiality of her own face

Orlan is moving toward attaining a becoming-minor²⁴ of the face. She reveals the attributes of bodies, situated within a state of affairs, yet remains non-reducible to any of these elements. In her becoming Orlan is simultaneously constituted through both verbal and visual (image) statements by her production, in the immaterial realm, of co-extensive and intermingling bodies, connecting with the intense and proliferating images of her surgically incised face.

The event of Orlan's becoming fills the present to such an extent that it incapacitates descriptive language.²⁵ Identity is evaded by the paradox of wounding (self and the spectator) both ways at once, subverting the action of the Idea. As spectators we desire to situate Orlan in the grounding frame of language and our understanding of the connections between Face and woman. "I say that I am doing woman-woman transsexualism by alluding to transsexuals" states Orlan (*Conference* 88). This statement doesn't imply a traversal from one sex to another, but rather Orlan's strategy of surgical interventions to re-invent a becoming-woman that is other than the social and psychoanalytic apprehension of physiological and gendered female subjectivities. Orlan uses her own corporeality to engage incorporeality at the surface of the event. Orlan's becoming-Face moves in both directions at once, revealing the process of woman as wound, wounded and wounding. This separation is not to suggest that becoming tolerates separations between before and after, past and future. Orlan as a corporeal event confronts us from outside the concepts we already have (of art, woman, face, gender), and the subject positions we already occupy. The difficulty or challenge of Orlan is that she manifests a corporeal event, through an open-ended faciality that

²⁴ "Becoming-Minor" is discussed in chapter 2.

²⁵ ".....Blanks for when words gone" (Becket, "Worstword Ho" in *Nohow On*, fn 91, *Critical and Clinical* 206)

forces us to think, and it is this capacity to generate thought that situates Orlan within Deleuze's philosophy of immanence.

Chapter Two

(In)Corporeal

“Pas une image juste, juste une image.” (Not a just image, just an image).

(Godard *Vent d'Est*)

“Nothing is less personal than the face.” (Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*)

“Yes the face has a great future, but only if it destroyed, dismantled.”

(Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*)

In the previous chapter I explored the ways in which Orlan uses her corporeality to model the question – “What can a body do?” – and her subsequent provocation to both the spectator and art to engage with the event of her radically altered body in order to think through or imagine the concept of an enlarged human agency. In this chapter I will engage with Deleuze–Guattari’s concept of faciality in order to show how the Face is constructed according to dominant linguistic and visual representation systems, and how the conditions of the socius and the market combine to circulate desired images that designate Woman as Face. I also argue that Orlan’s radical corporeality works to reveal and disinvest the potency of particular order-words that effect an *incorporeal transformation* for women. I show how Orlan’s *Reincarnation* deterritorialises both the subject and the State’s organising of materiality through the operations of the assemblage. I will also explore how Orlan models the rules of the assemblage through a pathological form of expression with an artistic form of content, that works not as pathology, but as a highly evolved response or indictment of the specific conditions of the alliance between the socius, art and the market. Finally I suggest that Orlan

defamiliarises the construction of Woman as Face through effecting a becoming-minor of the face.

For Deleuze–Guattari a “regime of signs” constitutes a formalised semiotic system that causes or constrains linguistic expression (*Plateaus* 111). Each “regime of signs” plays a role in defining, delimiting and particularising the potential of the Face according to dominant linguistic and visual representation systems. Deleuze–Guattari describe the face as a “landscape”:

Now the face has a correlate of great importance: the landscape, which is not just a milieu but a deterritorialised world. There are a number of face-landscape correlations...Christian education exerts spiritual control over both faciality and landscapity: Compose them both, colour them in, complete them, arrange them according to a complementarity linking landscapes to faces. Face and landscape manuals form a pedagogy, a strict discipline, and were an inspiration to the arts as much as the arts were an inspiration to them. Architecture positions its ensembles—houses, towns or cities, monuments or factories—to function like faces in the landscape they transform. Painting takes up the same movement but also reverses it, positioning a landscape like a face, treating one like the other. The close-up in film treats the face primarily as a landscape; that is the definition of film, black hole and white wall, screen and camera. (*Plateaus*, 172)

One reason why Orlan instills horror in the viewing audience is that she chooses to cut open her Face. In our culture the Face is considered to be a signifier of humanity enjoying a privileged status compared with the rest of the body. Deleuze–Guattari’s concept of faciality works to free the face from its embeddedness in human discourse, through arguing that the Face is not a part of the body, but rather a specific

organisation of human sociality. Similarly Orlan uses the Face as the prime focus for her art and knowingly calls on centuries of visual representations where the Face has been placed at the centre of enquiry into human identity. The representational genres of portraiture, photography and cinema caress and structure the image of the Face as a surface. Viewers read and infer meaning from the Face by drawing on meaning systems that circulate as part of discursive systems including philosophy, structural semiotics, psychoanalysis and art. The political, punishment and penal exactitudes of the regimes of power, enforced in colony, dynasty and empire, are similarly inscribed and “indexed to specific faciality traits” (*Plateaus* 168). Deleuze–Guattari situate the Face as necessary for the operations of signifying systems that work to produce and sustain the apparatus of power. The Face, then, is not a natural given of the person; it is produced by the regime of signs, and created in the mode of discourse through an act of language.

Deleuze–Guattari situate the Face as a *special mechanism* located at the intersection of two semiotic systems or strata: signifiante and subjectification (*Plateaus* 167), with which we are all forced to comply. Signifiante refers to the endless proliferation from sign to sign. Signifiante is limitless and its effect is to replace the notion of the sign as designating the thing or entity it refers to. What is retained is the sign’s formal relation with other signs in a so-called signifying chain. The question is not what a given sign – such as the Face, and in this case Orlan’s face signifies or means, but which other signs it refers to, or which other signs add themselves to it and form an indeterminate network? (*Plateaus* 112). Subjectification, the other element of stratification, is a dual process where unformed subject matter is initially fixed, then exposed to subjectifying procedures of the agencies of power (the State, the Church and the market). The unformed subject is fixated by an external force and given a precise form, and then held

accountable to that form (Buchanan, *Metacommentary* 124). Significance is “never without a white wall upon which it inscribes its signs and redundancies”, while subjectification is “never without a black hole in which it lodges its consciousness, passion, and redundancies” (*Plateaus*, 167). This constitutes the white wall / black hole system of facial organisation, necessary for the system of signification to operate.

For Deleuze, prior to a language that enables reference to the world before us, there are *investments in intensities*. Investments produce an assemblage¹ of bodies – using that term assemblage in its broadest sense – and it is these investments that produce connections. A body connects with another body, drawing joy² from the connection. Certain images and inscriptions are enjoyed and inscribed with a meaning content through language. In the instance of the Face, each eye of the group anticipates and derives enjoyment from certain images. The Face, when situated as a concept rather than as a part of the body, is accorded an added virtual dimension; the Face of fantasy, pleasure and desire (Colebrook, *Gilles Deleuze* 82). Colebrook observes that a consequence of “partial” investments is their organisation by the social machine into institutions including “the family”, “motherhood” and “culture” (82). The social institution “woman” is similarly organised by the social machine. The consequence of this investment is that the Face is produced – as distinct from a naturally occurring given – and situated as an enjoyable or desired image. The Face becomes a signifier through being “overcoded”. In other words the image is “read” as a sign, inferring meaning and

¹ “What is an assemblage? It is a multiplicity which is made up of many heterogeneous terms and which establishes liaisons, relations between them, across ages, sexes and reigns - different natures. Thus the assemblage’s only unity is that of co-functioning: it is a symbiosis, a ‘sympathy’. It is never filiations which are important, but alliances, alloys” (Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues* 69).

² Following Nietzsche’s concept of “Joyous Science” Deleuze would use “Joy” as a way of freeing oneself from the illusion of a unified or true world. “Joy” is to live one’s life actively, and without *ressentiment*. (Colebrook, *Deleuze* 19).

referred to some subject who reads the meaning. The Face, and by extension the body, is homogenised, converted and translated by the abstract machine of overcoding.³ The potent overcoding of the head and body by something Deleuze–Guattari term the Face is elaborated in their concept of *faciality*. Deleuze–Guattari distinguish the head from the Face, suggesting that the human head is not necessarily a Face and that the Face is produced:

Only when the head ceases to be a part of the body, when it ceases to be coded by the body, when it ceases to have a multidimensional, polyvocal corporeal code – when the body, head included, has been decoded and has to be *overcoded* by something we shall call the Face (*Plateaus*, 170).

Deleuze–Guattari remind us that “[c]oncrete faces cannot be assumed to come ready-made. They are engendered by an *abstract machine of faciality* which produces them” (*Plateaus* 168), something from which we all suffer. The abstract machine, when represented as the faciality machine, functions either to force “[f]lows into significances and subjectifications, [or] into knots of arborescence and holes of abolition” (*Plateaus*, 190). In this sense the primary role of the faciality machine is to order the Face into a space of compliance through the “computation of normalities and subsequently the detection of deviance from these normalities” (Hirschorn, “Body as ready (to be re-)made” 129). If the head and its elements are facialised, the entire body is also facialised as part of an inevitable process.

The Face is read as a totalised and coherent entity engendered through a *faciality machine* necessary for the maintenance of the social machine and the operations of

³ The abstract machine has two different states: the abstract machine of overcoding implies the social production of the face. This contrasts with the abstract machine that constructs a real yet to come (*Plateaus* 198 – 190).

power. This means that individuals are defined against two forms of subjectivation: firstly through conformity to the homogeneity of the face system (“you will be One”), and secondly by marking the individual with a known and recognizable identity. This ensures that the system of faciality will deny or exclude any faces that do not conform, seem suspicious (*Plateaus* 177), or are “unamenable to the appropriate significations” (168). An example of this exclusion is provided by the nineteenth-century incarceration of female “hysterics” in the Salpêtrière Lock Hospital in Paris. Their paralysed faces, wrought into patterns of spasm or nervous tics, was considered deviant or unassimilable and the women were concealed from the broader population.⁴ Similarly Orlan’s non-face can also be situated as unassimilable, and ambivalent reactions to the active undoing of her face affirm this position. With this move Orlan “renders visible” the operations of power; her creation of an-other face escapes the white wall / black hole system of facial organisation necessary for the system of signification to operate.

The transcendent and reifying functions of the abstract machine of faciality opposes Deleuze’s concept of a *machine* to describe the possibility of an active ethics. Connectivity and production constitute the two key features of a machine’s functioning, when understood in this way. The *abstract machine of faciality* implies the social production of the Face and denies the corporeal complexity of woman. The resulting dialectic – between a semiotic face and a material body – means that the machine reduces (or signifies) woman to a Face, totalised through inscription by the eye. However, the faciality machine, because it is abstract, can also activate realms of potentiality or possibility, performing a refacialisation that dismantles the strata and

⁴ See Jacqueline Rose, “Femininity and its Discontents”. Ed. J. Rose, *Sexuality in the Field of Vision*. London: Verso, 1986. 83 – 103.

steers traits of faciality down lines of positive deterritorialisation or creative flight. This is the abstract machine performing in its secondary or immanent sense. Orlan, through her appropriation of facial components and her creation of a non-face, functions as an abstract machine, steering her created and deterritorialised face down a line of flight. Deleuze–Guattari remind us that there is nothing imaginary or symbolic about a line of flight, such lines constitute a reality and are very dangerous for societies. Lines of flight are active and groups and individuals, such as Orlan, both create and function as a line of flight presenting an obstacle to molar systems of organisation (*Plateaus*, 204).

By dismantling and re-ordering her Face (specifically in *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan* series), Orlan makes visible the process and consequences of our *addiction* to faciality. She models the outcome of a process where the totalising effect of the faciality machine is challenged. Orlan inverts the primacy of the ideal Face through strategically using her body to create her own machinic connections with the machines of art, surgery, philosophy, language and imaging technologies. Orlan's unstable Face refuses inscription into the overall grid of the abstract machine of faciality. Through her strategy of marking continuums of intensity, as evidenced in the visceral intensity of the *Reincarnation* series, Orlan combines fluxes, disorganising the harmonisation of form and the abstract machine of overcoding that situates the Face as a specific organisation of human sociality. Orlan's announced intention to undergo rhinoplasty in order to attach to her face the largest nose that surgery could construct is a strategy designed to deny her critics' claims that she is attempting to make herself beautiful. Such a strategy simultaneously denies the aesthetics of form by potentially exposing both herself and the spectator to a limit experience. However it seems that this operation, planned to occur in Japan, will not continue due to the lack of medical expertise and interest, and because in Orlan's

words, such an intervention would be a “surenchère” – a bridge too far (Ince, *Millennial* n2, 77).

Throughout the series of nine surgical interventions that constitute her *Reincarnation*, Orlan is both working against and exploiting the problem I have designated “Woman as Face”. Due to the operations of the abstract machine of faciality and its correlative elements of conformism and closure, woman is reduced to a Face. The problem for women is the apportioning of either reward or approbation on the basis of how each face is judged against an indeterminate or virtual standard of idealised female beauty. Representational art provides the image, and can endorse the fantasy, of Woman as Face, contributing to its perpetuation and circulation as a desired image. Orlan’s appropriation of Old Masters’ (en)visioning of the ideal female Face actively engages with the problem, by utilising the technology of plastic surgery⁵ to reconstitute her Face, using a template of her own design and purpose. Through her corporeal art, Orlan effects an inversion of the desired ideal face, turning it against itself in order to reveal the Face as a problem from which all women suffer. Orlan shows us that the process of *becoming-woman* undoes the structures of recognition, identification or imitation of woman as a molar entity. Conversely Orlan reveals the difficult and painful reality of what it takes to become a woman. The impact of Orlan’s de and re-facialisation constitutes an active challenge to the machine of faciality where a Face is necessary in the signifiatory system in order to effect the designation woman. For Deleuze “[w]oman is a position in relation to the majority (or dominant set of social norms)

⁵ Ince comments that “cosmetic surgery’s privileging of the face may be simply a continuation of the face’s prominence in painted and photographic portraiture, the cinema and advertising. Postmodern faciality – the inhuman, surface ‘mask’ face evoked by Deleuze–Guattari – is demonstrated in a number of the large and luridly coloured photographic plates from Orlan’s operation “Omnipresence”, and particularly by the image of the surgeon’s knife cutting in front of her left ear to lift away her face from the side of her head.” (*Millennial* 80)

which must be engaged in order to interrogate or escape that norm, by both women and men” (Driscoll, “The Woman in Process” 65). Spectators encounter Orlan’s Face as a sign, but her *Reincarnation* project differs from any sign they may have experienced. There is no transcendental meaning, for Orlan is engaged in the active process of undoing the notion of woman as foundation or ground, in order to set a process in motion; a process that reveals the rigid designator “woman” as an assemblage of socially coded affects. Deleuze–Guattari conceptualise this practice as *schizoanalysis* or *micro politics* that works to disinvest prevailing centrism and unities such as woman, face and identity:

This is the program, the slogan of Schizoanalysis: Find your own black holes and white walls, know them, know your faces; it is the only way you will be able to dismantle them and draw your lines of flight. (*Plateaus* 188)

Orlan, through revealing the process of the production of Woman as Face, refuses the spectator’s enjoyment and investment in the Face’s virtualised attributes, for example beauty and perfection. These attributes are produced by the social machine and sustained by a diversity of imaging machines including portraiture, cinema⁶ and photography. These media also generate the commodification and the economy of the image. Such images have value in the market place, and it is in the market place that Orlan sells her corporeal residue to finance her surgical interventions. It is the disjuncture between seeing and speaking that Orlan’s *Reincarnation* effects that has provoked a decade of outraged responses from spectators and critics, whom I would suggest perceive Orlan’s radical immanence as a threat to established order and systems, and implicitly to their own investment or interest in maintaining such systems.

⁶ Teresa de Lauretis uses the term *cinematic apparatus* to describe “the apparatus of representation, an image machine developed to construct images or visions of social reality and the spectator’s place in it” (*Alice Doesn’t* 37).

While negative responses reveal the rigidity (the signifiante) of their own discourse, such hostility is also productive in that it attracts attention to Orlan's project. The potency of Orlan's corporeal strategy to reveal and make visible the impact of such systems for women remains one of her singular achievements.

Orlan's own explanations of her surgical performances emphasises that she was never engaged in a quest to attain an ideal image of beauty.⁷ The combination of "ideal" facial elements suggests that she is in fact deconstructing the notion of a unified ideal, and exposing the futility of this quest. Her pluralist aesthetic constitutes an imitative repetition of the practice of the Greek painter Zeuxis, who when composing his portrait of Helena in the city of Kroton chose features from five virgins in order to reproduce the most beautiful part of each woman (Ince, *Thinking Expenditure* 148). Since 1997 Orlan has developed a series of hybridised images that visually critique the notion of beauty as both culturally determined and artefactual. The *Refiguration hybridation* series no 1 (1997 -) involves Orlan hybridising her own head with the sculptured heads, bone structures, decorative prostheses and make-up of Mayan beauties. Ince comments that the shaping of the skull to provide extra height was an important aspect of the beauty standards of Mexican civilizations (Ince, *Millennial* 87).

⁷ The tenacity of this interpretation is evidenced by a press conference, convened by Orlan after the *Omnipresence* intervention, in an attempt to stop misinterpretation by the mainstream media. At this press conference Orlan said: "Can you see my face? So you'll stop writing that I want to be the most beautiful woman, that I want the Mona Lisa's forehead or that I want to look like Botticelli's Venus, which is a beauty standard I'm fighting against. And so, in the next few days, 50% of the articles led with titles like 'She wants to be ideal beauty', 'She wants Psyche's nose' [...] So, I have to conclude not only that I show images that make us blind, but that I also speak words which make us deaf' (in the operating room I was always accompanied by a sign language specialist for the deaf and hard of hearing!)" (Ince, *Millennial* 45).

Orlan makes visible the *incorporeal transformation* inherent in the order-word *beauty*. In effect Orlan confronts the transcendental term *beauty*, as idealised through Renaissance representations. She inverts the word against itself through modeling the way that non-corporeal attributes sink into the skin and create a corporeal impact. Through surgically wounding her face, (a corporeal act) Orlan denies the spectator investment in the affective status of the word *beauty* (incorporeal transformation). The proposition “her face is beautiful” positions a subject or substance as having certain qualities, and implicitly receiving social rewards. If the word *beautiful* is attributed to a woman overcoded as a Face, this has the capacity to effect an *incorporeal transformation* in terms of her perceived self-status and privileged status confirmed by others. This is the potency of certain order-words as they relate to the imag(in)ing of Woman as Face, and the efforts ordinary women make to acquire an actual or imagined status. These perceptions cause most women to invest in and desire similar attribution, intensifying the affliction of faciality and the subsequent reduction of woman to Face.

One strategy that enables women to attain the perceived rewards associated with the word *beauty* is cosmetic surgery. Because *beauty* is commodified, hyper-visualised and desired through the “overlit realm”⁸ of advertising and television, spectators cannot conceive of any motive for Orlan’s *Reincarnation* other than an attempt to make herself beautiful, or else see it as a shallow “pastiche” and fail to see the way Orlan’s art indicts the notion of beauty. Critics who claim that Orlan is “[a] woman undergoing facial surgery in an attempt to look like an idea of beauty” (Coningham, “Orlan, Sandra Gering Gallery, New York” 60), or that Orlan is striving to “[p]rogressively sculpture her face into the quintessential female form” (Fox, “A

⁸ The term is from J.G. Ballard’s “Crash”.

Portrait in Skin and Bone” 1993), reflects firstly the inability of commentators to conceive of a woman altering her appearance outside a paradigm of achieving the “normal”, perfected, fixed and standardised face through cosmetic surgery. Secondly these responses illustrate the potency of addiction to the (imagined) realm of the beautiful face. This addiction is evidenced by the failure of commentators to enquire beyond the obviousness of Orlan’s surgical interventions and into the use of her body to encourage alternate thought. Instead most commentators insistently attempt to interpret a work that is actually only open to experimentation. As Michelle Hirschorn comments:

Contrary to the common misinterpretations of her project, Orlan’s aim is not to combine multiple elements of the beauty in the hope of becoming the ultimate ideal woman, but rather to deconstruct the notion that such a thing could actually exist. (“body as ready (to be re-) made” 116)

Through her surgical mimesis Orlan is not seeking any one particular ideal of femininity. Orlan’s development of composite computer-generated templates to guide different surgeons involved in the *Reincarnation* series deconstructs the aesthetic of unity. Orlan’s facial de- and re-construction models parallel processes of the social production of the Face, and the problem of the Face as an illness from which we all suffer. To dismantle the Face is to tamper with the social and political requirements of the assemblages of power, hence the importance of Orlan.⁹ This is not to suggest that Orlan’s refacialisation strategy should be adopted by all women. Rather her project functions to make visible our collusion with and investment in the action and effect of the signifier, where women are implicated and facialised as part of a dominant meaning system through the *abstract*

⁹ Orlan’s “tampering” affirms Deleuze–Guattari’s view that art operates in the local to change the global.

machine of faciality. Secondly, Orlan, by corporeally modifying her actual body to reach virtual ends, models the possible construction of a real-yet-to-come – an alternate reality not governed by any fixed norm or image of self. The confrontational consequence of Orlan's de-facialisation is her self-willed production of a non-self. The result is a predominantly uncomprehending response from observers who seek and fail to find a connection with a face that refuses inscription by the faciality machine:

Her face reminded me of a toad's; perhaps because the only expression was in her eyes. No other feature moved, a milky-pale makeup accentuating the apertures: mouth, nostrils, and eyes. Her hairline was shaved in an arc making a dome-shaped brow, its curve continuing down through the bloated cheeks. This moon-faced immobility of a countenance had something of the Buddha and something of a waxen medieval *hausfrau*. Then again the silicone implants bulging under her eyebrows made her seem like an extraterrestrial wannabee.
(Blackwell, "Orlan" 68)

On this reading Orlan has retained sufficient supplies of signifi-ance and subjectification to turn them against their own systems. Deleuze–Guattari indicates that because of the danger of self-destruction, we can't deterritorialise completely. Deterritorialisation is "measured with the craft of a surveyor" (*Plateaus*, 160). Small rations of subjectivity are needed in order to respond to the dominant reality. This is achieved if you "mimic the strata" (160). Blackwell's account indicates that Orlan's presence reveals familiar elements in the form of recognisable – albeit distorted – facial features and cosmetics. Orlan's art counter-actualises what is already there, disrupting the familiar in order to create affective images that produce new ways of seeing, enabling connections with a force outside our present frame of thinking. For Deleuze "to think is to experiment, but experimentation is always that which is in the process of coming about – the new,

remarkable, and interesting that replace the appearance of truth and are more demanding than it" (*Philosophy* 111). Orlan's overall impact is that of an unfamiliar or an unthinkable artistic practice and presence that in turn makes us think.

Orlan, by freeing herself from the illusion of transcendence, models the potential for an alternate ontology through adopting a position of the *univocity* of being. For Deleuze, *univocity* means insisting on the actual and the virtual as fully real, where the virtual is immanent in the real (*Philosophy* 156). Life for Deleuze is virtual power and the power to become. Colebrook distinguishes between possibility and power, where *possibility* "is a pale and imagined version of the actual world, virtual difference and becoming is the *power* of the world" (*Gilles Deleuze* 97). Orlan uses her body to make visible the action and effect of the signifier, where women are implicated and facialised as part of the dominant meaning system through the *abstract machine of faciality*. The potency of the faciality machine is evidenced in the subjectification of woman who is totalised or reified through the territory of the Face. Buchanan (*Metacommentary* 125) reminds us that it was Foucault who reconfigured subjectivity as a process in order to make visible the power and affect of reification. Similarly Orlan makes visible the effects of reification of the subject as Face. Her corporeal project works to remind us that we've forgotten that the Face had to be invented. The subject's affliction and organisation by the abstract machine of faciality constitutes an obvious example where the Face is produced through a facialising aesthetic generated through compliance with established principles determined by the established order: the beautiful, the proportional and the canonical. If human beings have a destiny, comment Deleuze-Guattari, it is to escape the Face, to dismantle the Face and facialisations, by strange true becomings that get past the wall and the organisation of the Face. The question is what can be an adequate

response to the problem of Woman as Face and how does Orlan address that problem?

2.1 The Problem of Woman as Face

The Ultimate Masterpiece: The Reincarnation of St Orlan refuses the prescribed social, political and representational overcodings of Woman as Face. Orlan can be situated as a diagnosis or symptomatology of social forms originating in specific desires or investments in the beautiful Face. What the *Reincarnation* project makes visible is how the idea of the social institution (woman) or the social attribute (feminine) is imagined, produced and sustained. This system of social institutions, or what Deleuze describes as social machines, constitutes collective assemblages, with the potential to extend experience. A machine is nothing more than its connections. Life is a proliferation of *machinic connections* both human and non-human. What Orlan shows through her machinic connections with the machines of art, technology, language and surgery is the shape of not-yet-given-future; one that has yet to be fully understood or realised. Therefore her project is utopian, and needs to be understood, in part, from a utopian perspective.¹⁰

How does Orlan achieve this disorientation? Firstly, through appropriating and surgically incorporating selected features from Old Master's portraiture with her own face, Orlan denudes the Face as a sign and disturbs any sense of some universally recognised subject. Secondly, through her destabilisation of the subject Orlan destroys the spectator's

¹⁰ For Deleuze utopia designates the conjunction of philosophy or the concept, with the present milieu. However, he also acknowledges that given the "mutilated meaning" public opinion accords to the term, it is probably not the best word (*Philosophy?* 100). Orlan's double-deterritorialisation that is away from, yet connected with the present milieu, and her de-facialisation, that oscillates between break-down and break-through, reveals the potential for becoming if the stifling forces of that milieu are made visible. I would therefore situate her project as utopian.

investment in the notion of an identity. The effect of her strategy is to free us from the limits of our imagination, and allows us to think for and beyond ourselves. Félix Guattari observes that “machinic mutations understood in the largest sense, which is deterritorialised subjectivity, should no longer trigger in us defensive reflexes, backward-looking nervous twitches” (*Chaosmosis* 97). Audience responses to Orlan are similarly imbued with *backward looking nervous twitches*, revealing nostalgia for the perceived loss of some real world now considered to be unavailable. Even if what can be called the utopic vision¹¹ of her *Reincarnation* project fails, the intensity of the dialogue that has emerged in response to Orlan’s refacialisation remains one of her most interesting achievements.

Erin Blackwell captures the complexity and contradiction of responses (or machinic connections) to Orlan’s participation in a 1994 San Francisco arts forum:

This Orlan, this visitor from France, this plastic surgery enthusiast, this media hound, this masochistic exhibitionist, this feminist artist, this walking identity crisis, this site-specific self-portrait – what were we to supposed to make of her? We could see her, but were we getting her? Not that we didn’t try. Everybody took a stab. And nearly everybody made the same mistake. [I]ndulging ourselves in violent reactions to the content of her work, we ignored its complicated formality. (Erin Blackwell, “Orlan” *The New Art Examiner* 69)

Blackwell’s reference to the “complicated formality” of Orlan’s *Reincarnation* can be

¹¹ Historically then, this is the sense in which the vocation of Utopia lies in failure; in which its epistemological value lies in the walls it allows us to feel around our minds, the invisible limits it gives us to detect by sheerest induction, the miring of our imaginations in the mode of production itself. ..”(Jameson, *Seeds of Time* 75)

aligned with the “formalism” of Deleuze–Guattari’s *concrete rules* (which will be developed in relation to art in the conclusion) when applied to their concept of the assemblage.¹² The purpose of these concrete rules is to avoid a too sudden destratification of the organism. Destratification involves a process of freeing oneself from the burden of strata identified by Deleuze and Guattari as the organism, signifi-ance and subjectification.

2.2 Orlan and the Assemblage

For Artaud and Deleuze, strata constitute the “Judgement of God” (*Plateaus* 158). This judgement is affirmed by classical artists, who through religious portraiture, are like God, making “[t]he world by organising forms and substances, codes and milieus and rhythms” (*Plateaus* 502). Conversely, the concrete rules of the assemblage are applicable to Orlan’s strategy of engaging with the problem of Woman as Face, in part through the attribution of order-words such as *beauty* and *glamour*, and their invocation of desirability through the alliance of market and media. To reveal the impact of these attributes through the creation of a surgically altered self requires caution,¹³ for at all times Orlan is confronted with the reality of serious disfigurement or death. Deleuze–Guattari argue that while the strata are a form of sickness unto death for the assemblage, they remain susceptible to a host of destratifying practices, which constitute the utopian aspect of their work.

The question is what movement or impulse sweeps us outside the strata? How can we construct a plane outside the strata? What would a destratifying practice look like?

¹² “In general, I would claim Deleuze is in most respect a formalist, and indeed it has been my strategy [t]o illustrate the susceptibility of his discourse to formalisation” (Buchanan, *Metacommentary* 129).

¹³ This means that the notion of *beauty* cannot simply be eradicated through Orlan’s or any other artistic process. The consequences would be catastrophic.

What responses would such a practice generate? For to situate oneself outside the strata or in the absence of strata, means an absence of forms or substances, organisations or development, content or expression. We are disarticulated. Every undertaking of destratification which involves going beyond the organism and plunging into becoming needs to follow concrete rules to avoid the risk of either being tied back into the strata, or plunging into a black hole of nihilism.

For Deleuze–Guattari assemblages differ from strata. While they are produced in the strata, they operate in zones where milieus become decoded. Jameson invokes Deleuze–Guattari’s insistence on exteriority, which operates against the language of interiority and subjectivity. The “doctrine of externality” constitutes a device that opens a given phenomenon, be it a text or social individuality, to larger external forces and provides “a more supple provisional way of dealing with the operation of transcoding”. One-to-one correlations between already existing entities (art and society) are opened out to the potentiality of other connections (“Marxism and Dualism” 26–27). Hjelmslev’s linguistics provides a model for this process, and is co-opted by Deleuze–Guattari in their model of the assemblage, because its two planes include four terms that are related to each other only by exteriority. Firstly on a horizontal axis the assemblage comprises two components: one of content, the other of expression. On the one hand it is a *machinic assemblage* of bodies, of actions and passions intermingling and reacting to one another. On the other it is a *collective assemblage of enunciation*, comprised of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies.

On the vertical axis the assemblage comprises both *territorial* or *reterritorialised* sides, which stabilise the machine and *cutting edges of deterritorialisation* which

carry it away (*Plateaus* 88, 504). The concept of the assemblage is productive, and the complexity of the model is best conveyed by illustration and example. The complexity of Orlan's *Reincarnation* can be articulated when these four interconnected aspects are applied like a grid to Orlan's facial assemblage. (Buchanan, *Metacommentary* 126).

The application of Deleuze's program has the additional advantage of situating the four-fold frame of the assemblage in direct contrast to the dominance of psychoanalytic interpretations of the *Reincarnation* project (Adams 1996, Ince 2000). This is not to suggest that psychoanalytic interpretations of Orlan's project are wrong, but rather that psychoanalytic discourse – when situated as part of the strata – functions as a blockage, and stops at the point when things begin to become interesting. Orlan's project, particularly the very obviousness of her utilisation and destratification of the surgical machine (with castration being the obvious correlate, in conjunction with Orlan's woman-woman transsexualism statement) is "susceptible" to a psychoanalytic reading. Parveen Adam's Lacanian influenced reading compares Orlan's surgical self-invention to the gender reassignment of male-to-female transsexuals ("Operation Orlan" 144). Drawing on Lacan's account of sexual relations in which the woman's body is coded as phallic, Adams says of transsexuals "frequently the urge to refiguration involves a wish not to become a woman, but to become the *Woman*; "That is to *become* the phallus through castration" (120). Such a reading fails to engage with the differences between Orlan's *Reincarnation* and the desires of an individual undertaking gender reassignment. Clearly Orlan is not seeking to cross the frontier of sexual difference in order to become the phallus. Even if understood symbolically I am arguing that Orlan isn't trying to embody meaning in herself, but rather exerting meaning through practice.

There are two possible reasons for the prevalence of psychoanalytic readings of Orlan's project. Firstly the face, both actually and metaphorically, signifies the realm of the mirror and the gaze, both aspects of which are central to the theoretical territory of psychoanalysis. The psychoanalytic error, according to Deleuze–Guattari, can be found in the literature on the face. Sartre's theorising of the “look” and Lacan's writing on the “mirror” stage appeals:

[t]o a form of subjectivity, or humanity reflected in a phenomenological field or split in a structural field... [t]he gaze is but secondary in relation to the gazeless eyes, to the black hole of faciality. The mirror is but secondary in relation to the white wall of faciality (Plateaus 171).

Deleuze–Guattari's assertion that faciality is prior to the look and processes of reflection in general gives it a particular status. They continue that the face is subadjacent to the signifier and the subject, and constitutes the condition of possibility of signification (180). The face is situated as a kind of blank canvas upon which new and old figurations of the human can be inscribed. The title of Parveen Adams' book *The Emptiness of the Image* can be situated firstly as a response to the obvious primacy of the gaze for psychoanalytic discourse, and secondly as an affirmation of the necessity of the faciality machine's co-existence with and sustaining of a psycholanytic reading. Both aspects constitute an implicit confirmation of Deleuze–Guattari's positioning of the face as a mask or surface that works to deconstruct the notion of the face as being a window to the soul.

Orlan's constant deployment of textual excerpts during each surgical intervention can be read as constituting a strategic “blind” or what Deleuze–Guattari refer to in

relation to Kafka's texts as "bait" (*Kafka* 44).¹⁴ Orlan's use of psychoanalytic excerpts,¹⁵ alongside or in *adjacency* with philosophical, literary and Sanskrit texts including Michel Serres, Antonin Artaud, Alphonse Allais, Rimbaud and Elisabeth Betuel can similarly function as "bait". Initially each text appears as belonging to a distinct conceptual realm. Orlan then effects *a kind of sliding contagion*¹⁶ so that the boundaries between each excerpt give way. Each text interpenetrates and violates the homogeneous security of every other text while simultaneously referring to elements within the territorial space of the other excerpt. The susceptibility of psychoanalytic excerpts to this process of Orlan's spoken deterritorialising process is insufficiently acknowledged in the criticism. Further it reflects the failure of psychoanalytic commentators to think beyond the obvious territory of the psychoanalytic – which further demonstrates the potency of significance – and to consider why Orlan, over a decade of surgical interventions, uses language "that glides between a number of accepted discourses" (Polan, *Kafka* xxvii) including psychoanalysis, semiotics, theology and art.

For Deleuze–Guattari the assemblage is a formalist structure involving concrete rules for its realisation. Buchanan comments that:

[T]he assemblage is a structure, which like the novel is able to articulate the slide into oblivion of one mode of thought together with the rise to dominance of another without having to explain it in terms of either succession or negation, but can instead stage it as a co-adaptation. (*Metacommentary* 118)

¹⁴ "No doubt, Kafka holds out the bait. He holds it out even, and especially, to Oedipus; not from complacency but because he wants to make a very special use of Oedipus to serve his diabolical project" (*Kafka* 44).

¹⁵ Orlan reads an excerpt titled *La Robe* by the Lacanian psychoanalyst Eugénie Lemoine-Luccioni at the commencement of each of her surgical interventions.

¹⁶ This term is taken from Dana Polan's Introduction to *Kafka: Toward A Minor Literature*, xxvii.

The assemblage can be understood as an anti-hierarchical way of conceiving of the subject, one that specifically functions to deterritorialise the State's organising of materiality and property. The assemblage is tetravalent, operates simultaneously, and is constituted by concrete rules. These include:

Rule One: determine the territory of the assemblage, in this instance the regime of bodies that constitute the Orlan assemblage.

Rule Two: determine the regime of signs, and the pragmatic systems that they effect, while being aware that the designations of the planes of content and expression are *quite arbitrary* (*Plateaus* 45).

Rule Three: determine the cutting edges of deterritorialisation, and

Rule Four: determine what abstract machines they relate to and effect (*Plateaus* 503–505).

Deleuze escapes Jameson's charge of dualism by situating the assemblage as a simultaneous dialogue involving both poles. A necessary connectivity exists between the two poles, although forces may tend more strongly toward one form than the other. Each stage of Orlan's project – determining the territory of Renaissance art, the computer template incorporating selected facial features with her own image, the surgery, the incessant reading of textual excerpts, the virtual transmission, the gallery installations and sale of her corporeal excess to finance each stage of the project – can be aligned with the four-fold frame of the assemblage. The issue then is how can the four rules of the assemblage be simultaneously taken and applied to Orlan's *Reincarnation*?

The first concrete rule involves determining the territory of the assemblage. Orlan's territory is the body of Renaissance portraiture. Orlan deploys the ideal elements of

Renaissance representation and deterritorialises them for her own purpose. A Renaissance portrait is characterised by strong principles of unity and linear sequence that “[c]aptures appearances; but more than that, it adapts them to our system of thought” (Huyghe, *Art Forms and Society* 96). Orlan, through her selective appropriation of facial features surgically incorporated with her own image, decentres the totalisation of Woman as Face. Orlan’s method works through a visceral rupturing that makes the whole assemblage of image, voice and word flow away, sending the elements hurtling along a line of flight, deterritorialising meaning away from the constraints of the signifying system.

The assemblage’s second concrete rule involves determining the regime of signs and pragmatic systems that the assemblage effects. Orlan’s articulation of textual excerpts deterritorialises meaning away from the discursive frameworks of philosophy, psychoanalysis, and religion. These texts (expression) are co-extensive with the surgical machine that incorporates facial components from Renaissance portraiture into a facial template of Orlan’s own design (content). Through her own corporeality Orlan makes visible processes that generate the affliction of the face and the interactions of the forces of desire and investments that territorialise Woman as Face. She reveals how the order-word “Face” is assembled through the operations of “capture”, by State operations of annexation and appropriation, specifically through the effects of fashion, cosmetics, circulating images and the enunciation and affective attribution of order-words. When articulated these words have the capacity to effect an incorporeal transformation in interaction with a body, either an individual body or the body of a society, creating the event of Woman as Face.

Rule three involves determining the cutting edges of deterritorialisation. Each

element of her auto-portraiture, including the surgeon's scalpel, the observer's gaze, the breached artistic protocols, the transmitted video images and the gallery installations of her excess flesh, that circulate and disperse through time and space to generate a multiplicity of affects. The assemblage that produces Orlan constitutes an encounter from, and of the outside of, the Face, finding the limit of faciality. It is the outside that enables the movement of deterritorialisation. The assemblage denies any connection with the One, and continually defers any point of reference to a unifying system. Orlan's face "[o]pens a rhizomatic realm of possibility effecting the potentialisation of the possible, as opposed to arborescent possibility [Renaissance portraiture], which marks a closure, an impotence" (*Plateaus* 190). Each element of Orlan's assemblage both implicates and generates a space of the possible, of the unthought.

The fourth rule is concerned with determining the abstract machine and its devices. Buchanan observes that the abstract machine always "takes the form of schizzes or overflows that interrupt one flow only in order to induce another" (*Metacommentary* 129). Abstract machines are opposed to the abstract in the ordinary sense. They know nothing of form or substance. This is what makes them abstract, and also defines the concept of the machine in the strict sense. They are always singular and immanent and capable of mutation. It is the abstract machine that opens the assemblage to form relations with other assemblages. Orlan deploys the abstract machines of faciality, surgery, technology, language, the spectator and art, and uses her body to access a virtual dimension drawing the viewer into a machinic assemblage. Initially the spectator can discern language and the corporeal in their heterogeneous forms. However, the two forms of expression and content meld into a

zone of indiscernibility,¹⁷ making a distinction between the two forms impossible. At this stage Orlan has reached an absolute threshold of deterritorialisation. With this loss of discernible borders and understandings a viewer may experience panic – “Panic is creation” (*Plateaus*, 73) – as a result of incomprehension. By determining and drawing the cutting edge and activating the abstract machine(s), the assemblage opens onto something else – the molecular or the cosmic, and intermediary aspects between these two poles.

Orlan’s face is a machinic assemblage, which infinitely proliferates and makes connections with, and through, assemblages of virtual technology and corporeal modification. The achievement of her project is that her face remains open to continuing proliferation through connection with the assemblage of the spectator some of whom generate comment and art criticism. Through discussion, debate, opposition, upset, noise, denial, circulating video and virtual images, swatches of post-operative blood-stained gauzes and Orlan’s corporeal residue, the machinic assemblage that is Orlan’s *Reincarnation* is constituted. These elements constitute *art as vortex* that sucks discourse, denial, spectatorial outrage, corporeal residue, images and words into itself in order to transform it. The corporeal potency and achievement of Orlan’s project is to deterritorialise the strata of the subject and identity that incessantly works through “assimilation, homogenisation and thematics” (*Kafka* 7). Orlan’s method, her calculated sobriety, makes the whole assemblage of image, word and voice flow, breaking any alignment with the hermeneutic imperative to codify, interpret and signify. This movement pushes language to its own limits. While Orlan is engaged in deterritorialising the order-word “Face”, the instinct of spectators is to

¹⁷ The *zone of indiscernibility* also describes the “in-between” of Orlan, specifically how she blurs the distinction between art and non-art, between body and aesthetics.

reterritorialise, as a result of an often panicky insistence on maintaining the constancy of identity and subjectivity. Such insistence blocks the line of flight, and contributes to negative responses. The Face constitutes a closed symbolic universe. Orlan, by deterritorialising the Face, makes flight act and create, revealing the pass-words that exist beneath the order-word. Through a calculated process of deterritorialising, exceeding and escaping the despotic regime of the signifier and the implicit overcoding of Woman as Face, Orlan functions as a pass-word, transforming the compositions of order into a “component of passage” (*Plateaus* 110). This constitutes the power of art inventing forms of experience that are not those of some universally recognised subject.

A continual temptation for those commenting on Orlan’s *Reincarnation* is the resort to metaphor (or what Jameson refers to as a “strategy of containment”), which reveals the “local” way that interpretive codes construct their objects of study, projecting “[t]he illusion that their readings are somehow complete and self-sufficient” (Jameson, *Political Unconscious* 10). While revealing the potency of metaphor as an often invoked analytic device, such an approach operates as a blockage – if it is just a metaphor then it can be dismissed – for engagement with the realer-than-reality-itself, or “irreality” of Orlan’s *Reincarnation*. Through a conjunction which makes strange words and images, Orlan’s disinvests or “kills all metaphor, all symbolism, all signification, no less than all designation” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 22). Instead the image of her Face does not resemble a Face, her words are no longer contained by signifying discourse. Orlan appropriates and borrows, to constitute a multiplicity that makes room for, and integrates with, a machinic assemblage of image, Face, sound and word. This assemblage no longer signifies anything, it is a circuit of intensive states that forms a mutual becoming in the heart of a necessarily multiple or

collective assemblage. In other words through her deterritorialisation of face and language, Orlan as corporeal artist offers the possibility of forging another consciousness and another sensibility. She achieves this possibility through effecting a becoming-minor of the face.

2.3 Becoming-Minor of the Face

Throughout *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze–Guattari distinguish between the majoritarian and the minoritarian. The majoritarian mode is distinguished as a *constant* and homogeneous system, where the opposition between man and woman is presented as already given, with “man” situated as the privileged term. Deleuze–Guattari describe “woman” as “becoming-woman” not because women are a minority, but due to the absence of a standard or norm for women. Conversely women are expected to conform to standards which are never defined. The minoritarian mode is distinguished by a potential that promotes connections, convergences and divergences that do not pass by way of the capitalist economy (Smith, *Critical and Clinical* xliii).

In *Kafka: Toward A Minor Literature*, Deleuze–Guattari situate Kafka as a writer who created an assemblage of enunciation and created a minor use of his own language. Kafka, a Czech Jew writing in German, stammered in his own language. It is this “speaking in one’s own language like a foreigner” (*Dialogues* 5), using language (or art) like an encounter, that can effect becoming-minor. Through their concept of minor literature or becoming-minor Deleuze–Guattari provide a means for the viewer to enter into Orlan’s work without being weighed down by containment strategies that implicitly metaphorise Orlan. It is a common strategy for contemporary art commentators to attribute the categories of avant-gardism,

corporeal or hybrid art, or the post-human¹⁸ in order to familiarise or contain Orlan's corporeal art. The effect of this response is that critics situate and reassure themselves from within known parameters of labeling and classification. Throughout her *Reincarnation*, Orlan effects a double stammering, both of the deterritorialised textual excerpts used during her surgical interventions, and in relation to the stammering of the spectator, for whom language fails. Through her refacialisation, Orlan destabilises the conventions of the Total. What she achieves is a becoming-minor of the Face. For Deleuze–Guattari the Face is a zone where becoming takes place, constituting the step to all becomings where “[d]ismantling the face is a politics involving real becomings, an entire becoming-clandestine” (*Plateaus* 188), including by extension becoming-woman. In their conceptualisation of Kafka's literature, Deleuze and Guattari elaborate three characteristics of minor literature; the deterritorialisation of language, the connection of the individual to political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation. (*Kafka* 18). For the purposes of this discussion these three characteristics will be applied to Orlan's *Reincarnation*, specifically to the becoming-minor of the Face, which can be read as the step to all becomings, because the Face is global before it is local.

Orlan, by deterritorialising language in conjunction with her corporeal wounding, makes language vibrate with a new intensity. This is achieved through denying the designation of something by its proper name: face, body, woman or art. Orlan's refusal to designate anything by its proper name or by the assignation of metaphors means that language functions like images, no longer forming anything but a sequence of intensive states following their line of escape (*Kafka* 21–22). For

¹⁸ An example is Rachel Armstrong's situating of Orlan's art as monstrous and Post-Human: “As a ‘deviant’ she has created a vision of alien or Post-Human form which unsettles the public conscience” (“Post-Human-Evolution” 59).

Deleuze–Guattari “[t]he proper name does not indicate a subject; the proper name fundamentally designates something that is the order of the event, of becoming or of the haecceity” (*Plateaus* 264). On this reading, Orlan’s name can be similarly situated as designating the event and becoming of Orlan, where as the agent of an infinitive Orlan utilises French and effects a state where words blur and language fails. The indiscernibility of word and materiality functions as a possibility indicating that something else is happening, where no subjective individuation occurs. The image of Orlan’s Face has “become becoming” (*Kafka* 23). Smith observes “one can enter a zone of becoming with anything, provided one discovers the artistic or literary means of doing so” (*Critical and Clinical* xxx).

The second characteristic of minor literature – the individual’s connection to political immediacy – can also be applied to Orlan’s refacialisation. Through resisting the signifying regime and eluding the referral from sign to sign through an infinite circle, Orlan initiates her own Face against the Face of the Despot God. Orlan inhabits a Renaissance style of representation in order to open an alternate site. She appropriates the effects and exclusions, the aporia¹⁹ of female representation. Through offering a series of provocative repetitions and contestations she refuses the subordination of thought to pre-existent concepts of image and the ideal of beauty. Since 1990 Orlan has systematically deterritorialised the accretions and codings that signify Woman as Face which are necessary for the operation of signifying systems that work to produce and maintain the apparatus of power. The faciality machine ensures the conformity of woman and, in alliance with the State, generates the

¹⁹ Aporia: derived from the Greek “obstacle”, “blocked passage”, “unpassable path”. Used in this context the aporia of female representation implies an obstacle to alternate representations of women which refuse the implicit requirement of a signifying regime and visual culture that appraises women in terms of beauty, “eye candy” and / or fantasy.

affliction of conforming to the machine's requirements. This affliction results in the quest or desire of women to conform to an image of beauty and ideality, operating as both obsession and constraint, perpetuated through the imaging realms of film, photography and advertising. The commodification of the Face is necessary for the operations of late-capitalist economies. Orlan's corporeal intensity reveals and enacts the limitations of such compliance, and her corporeal performance is both weapon and distorting mirror; a hostility to all that is immortalised and complete. What she reveals is the notion of woman as process and event, multiplicitous rather than dualist, woman as infinitive. In a sense this means the end of woman, or perhaps the indiscernibility of woman. However, it can be assumed that a continuation of the addiction to Woman will ensure presence rather than indiscernibility.²⁰

Orlan's *Reincarnation* can be understood as constituting the third characteristic of minor-literature. Her deterritorialisation of facial features in conjunction with virtual transmission of Orlan's image enables Orlan's Face to connect with other Faces in other places in a multiplicity of ways. What Orlan models is the outcome of a process where the selective responses of the faciality machine are challenged. She inverts the primacy of the ideal Face intensifying its attributes to create a non-Face that exists as shocking and open-wounded, a reve(a)lation of non-closure. Orlan's Face does not conform. She simultaneously re-presents the beginning of possibility as a psychically and socially threatening presence. Orlan, by being simultaneously real and unreal, models the potential of a real-yet-to-come through the becoming-minor of her Face that opens the human to new possibilities. Through her process of defamiliarisation and defacialisation, Orlan points up the fact that choice is not natural but historical.

²⁰ Conversely it can be argued that continued mediatisation of, and addiction to, the notion of "Woman" which implicitly works to constrain potential, makes some women indiscernible.

We cannot tell where our faces come from, in that our faces are cut from some historicised ideal world. Orlan's becoming-face makes the viewer aware of the plastic and constructed nature of the Face, – we just don't have a Face, but have a Face imposed on us.

Orlan is not seeking to represent the world, but rather she is trying to counter-actualise the world, making affective connections as a force “of something-to-be-perceived from points beyond our own” (Colebrook 61). The concept-event of Orlan, collapses structured distinctions into intensities creating the inexplicable that opens lines of time to disruption. As a time-form Orlan belongs to the *virtual*, defined as that which is abstract yet real: “out from the actual (as past) into the actual (as future)” (Massumi, *Parables* 58). She moves from being a Face to becoming a Face. That is, the artist goes beyond perceptual states and affective transitions of the lived, inhabiting the space as a seer and becomer, “[n]ot as the becoming *of* some subject, but a becoming towards others, a becoming towards difference, and a becoming through new questions” (Colebrook, “Introduction”, *Deleuze and Feminist Theory* 12).

Chapter Three

InCorporeal to Corporeal

“My work, and its ideas incarnated in my flesh, poses questions about the status of the body in our society and its evolution in future generations via new technologies and up-coming genetic manipulations.” (Orlan, *Conference: This is My Body... this is my Software*)

“Differentiation maintains an opening to the future, from which we derive our powers to affect life and to be affected by it. The goal of the direct time-image and other forms of art, whether successful or not, is to awaken these powers in us.”
(Rodowick, *Memory of Resistance*)

In order to explore the virtual dimensions of Orlan's *Reincarnation* series this chapter will situate Orlan's art as “cinematic”. I will argue that Orlan's use of imaging techniques interrupts synthesis and order and works to destabilise time for the viewer in order to generate an imagining and imaging of the world. This move enables an engagement with Deleuze's concept of difference and Orlan's undermining of the repetition of identity through difference. I will also suggest that images from Orlan's seventh surgical intervention, *Omnipresence*, paradoxically wound the observer while generating the pleasure of “eye pain”. Orlan's virtual presence and absence is presented as a double movement that generates a becoming of the image and an image of becoming which initiates a “crack” for the world-wide viewing audience. Finally I suggest that the spectatorial encounter with Orlan's non-face produces an opening onto an experience of alternate thought that is unlived and unknown offering the transformative possibility of becoming through difference.

The performance-intervention series *The Reincarnation of Saint Orlan* utilises a diversity of imaging techniques including digital imaging, video and photographic transmission, corporeal installations and on-line image banks. Orlan's corporeal art provokes through her incorporation of imaging effects that function to reveal her process of becoming – contrasted with a static and eternal image of Being – through intensities generated by the disconnection and singularity of her images. For the purposes of this analysis, Orlan's power or potential to free images from a fixed point of view (through her extensive use of electronic and digital media processes and other new media technologies) will be situated as "cinematic. This implies both a familiar and an extensive use. Cinematic form, connecting images sequentially through space and time, firstly creates new systems of spatiality and temporality, and secondly by means of these systems alters the possibilities for imagining and imaging the world. In Deleuze's two Cinema Books: *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image*, he argues that as an aesthetic practice, cinema "concretely produces a corresponding image of thought, a visual and acoustic rendering of thought in relation to time and movement" (Rodowick, *Deleuze's Time-Machine* 2). It is in the Cinema Books that Deleuze works through movement as concept to the forces of time as change and thought as experimentation, altering the possibilities for thinking and imagining. While Orlan is not a cinematographer, her emphasis on audio-visibility through extensive use of electronic media across her body of work, especially in the *Reincarnation* series, captures and generates the affects¹ of her surgical interventions in a spatial-temporal sequence. In addition, Orlan's work is cinematic in its seemingly irrational juxtapositions. Central to Orlan's performance is the dynamic of viewing relations where the virtual intensity of Orlan's re-designed face breaches the order of common

¹ "The affect is impersonal and is distinct from every individuated state of things: it is none the less *singular*, and can enter into singular combinations or conjunctions with other affects" (Deleuze, *Movement-Image* 98).

sense, or what Deleuze refers to as cliché.² Her body destabilises the notion of a stable art “object” and manifests a temporalised process that effects a violence of thinking, working to destabilise time as life³ for the viewer.

Given that cinema is arguably one of the most important inventions of modern life, and that the image is a contemporary addiction, the power and intensity of Orlan’s images can be understood as disrupting the spectator’s familiarity with cinematic / kinematic⁴ sequences or experiences; specifically the to-be-looked-at-ness of images. It is Orlan’s affective power to interrupt synthesis and order through the creation of images which cannot be integrated into a totality which aligns her with Nietzsche’s formulation of the “untimely”, affirming that reality is in a continual state of becoming. Orlan’s utilisation of cinematic techniques (cutting and sequencing) diverges from other modes of thought to reveal a process of becoming that is paradoxically timely for now. Thus an encounter with Orlan’s immanent spatio-temporality and asking “how it works?” equals finding out what it takes to make the viewer think and create new forms of thought:

Thought is primarily trespass and violence. [C]ount upon the contingency of an encounter with that which forces thought to raise up and educate the absolute necessity of an act of thought or a passion to think. The conditions of a true critique and a true creation are the same: the destruction of an image of thought which presuppose itself and the genesis of an act of thinking in thought itself.

(Deleuze, *Difference* 139)

² “A cliché is a sensory-motor image of the thing” (*Time-Image* 20).

³ “The task of life is to make all these repetitions coexist in a space in which difference is distributed” (*Difference and Repetition* xix). Also for Deleuze Life is not Nature, but rather the plane of immanence of desire that moves and connects across the assemblages that constitute Orlan’s *Reincarnation*. See Chapter Two.

⁴ “Kinematic” is distinguished from “cinematic” in that it is not the cinema, but the image itself.

Inherent in the Time-Image is its power to awaken the idea that “we are not yet thinking”. It is the time-image that puts thought into contact with the “unthought, the unsummonable, the inexplicable, the undecideable, the incommensurable” (*Time-Image* 214). This power is thought from the outside, and is concerned with *force* and relations of forces. Forces operate at a site, and in contrast with forms – which are distinguished by extensivity, the actual and perceptions – operate as the dimensions of the Outside and the virtual, not as “space”, but as “becoming” or “emergence” (Rodowick, “Memory of Resistance” 38 – 39). Orlan utilises new media technologies, not to represent the world, but rather to make the world emerge or become, through the creation of unknown or unrecognised affects. Her deterritorialisation of facial features generates an “extreme confusion of feelings”⁵ through displacing and decentering subjects and identities. Orlan’s process of self-realisation wrests her body from the environment or ground which produces subjects. Orlan models an agency that transcends the given. It is through her project of “carnal art” that Orlan appropriates, self-fashions and uses cinematic genres including video and on-line formats to create a disjunction between what Deleuze terms “the visible and the articulable” (*Foucault* 38).⁶ The spectator sees but is unable to articulate the intensity and difference of Orlan’s surgically incised face. She is outside their assemblage of knowledge and opens up a gap or disjunction between what is seen and what is said.

Between-ness⁷ or the notion of the interval is central to Orlan’s project through its imbrication of both corporeal and cinematic forms. For Deleuze the methods of

⁵ See (*Plateaus* fn 50, 542).

⁶ “[K]nowledge, in Foucault’s new concept of it, is defined by the combinations of visible and articulable that are unique to each stratum of historical formulation. Knowledge is a practical assemblage, a ‘mechanism’ of statements and visibilities” (Deleuze, *Foucault* 51).

⁷ Massumi situates between-ness as a relay between the corporeal and incorporeal dimensions of a body that signals this is not yet a subject, but it may well be the conditions of emergence of a subject (*Parables* 14).

BETWEEN, (“between two images”) and the AND are necessary for circumventing firstly the cinema of the One, and secondly the cinema of Being = is (*Time-Image* 180). Orlan’s “cinematic” corporeality circumvents the cinema of the One, through her utilisation of method of the AND – “the this and then that” (180) – the in-between of text and image, sound and vision, cinema and television, that makes the indiscernible (the frontier) visible (180). This is equated with Deleuze’s concept of the “irrational cut” where “the modern image cannot be integrated into a totality; it is connected through “irrational cuts” between the non-linked, a confrontation takes place between ‘outside’ and ‘inside’” (Deleuze, *The Time-Image* xvi). The irrational intervals are neither spatial nor images in the usual sense. Rather they open onto what is outside of space or virtuality, the becoming of forces; a relation between power and resistance as thought from the outside (Rodowick, “Memory of Resistance” 39 – 40). It is the capacity of philosophy and art to perpetuate the memory of resistance, through a resistance to habitual repetition where time is calculated, rationalised and reified that constitutes its utopian aspect (48).

Orlan’s emphasis on the space-between is evident in the installation titled *Entre-Deux* (*Between Two*) exhibited at the Centre Georges Pompidou (1994). *Between Two* comprises 41 pairs of photographic plates (photos by Raphaël Cuir) from the 1993 intervention *Omnipresence*, and computer-generated “self-portraits” on metal panels. Each image proceeds chronologically. The top register shows post-operative images of the artist’s face, while the lower register comprises computer-generated portraits of Orlan as morphed composites of ideal female portraits. The space between the upper and lower registers indicates the date for each of the post-operative forty-one days – an implied reference to Christ’s forty days in the wilderness. The bruised and multi-coloured upper images gaze across the fissure to the serenity of the composite images

in the lower register. Orlan makes the violence of the surgical encounter visible, and the impact of the affect is negotiated between the here and there, between the then and now. Orlan's move of resistance draws attention not to the fixity of identity, but rather to forces implicit in surgically conferred, shifting visual identities. It works as "a radical calling into question of the image"(180) and opens thought up to the outside.

Between-ness, or the notion of the interval AND the event, is also central to the structure of the *Reincarnation* project, with its surgical interventions of nine operations conducted between 1990–1993.⁸ In the interval between the operations, Orlan generates artworks, corporeal installations and digital images, each component modeling a "cinematic" temporality where spectators are taken to the limit of the sayable and thinkable: "a blind word and a mute vision" (Deleuze, *Foucault* 65). Cinema achieves this through the imagination of time that offers an image of time itself (Colebrook, *Deleuze* 30). Deleuze's cinema books express the capacity of life to go beyond its human, recognisable and already given forms. Orlan's mediated performance constitutes a formula for creating the unendurable that "expresses a new relation between thought and seeing, or between thought and the light source, which constantly sets the thought outside itself, outside knowledge, outside action" (Deleuze *Time-Image* 176). While Deleuze's elaboration of the AND as a connection outside existing systems is read in relation to political and social systems, it also provides a conceptual device applicable to Orlan's corporeal art, operating outside existing systems of art as commodity. Throughout her artistic career, Orlan has articulated opposition to existing structures of safe art, "hyper-adapted to the laws of the market" (Orlan, *Conference* 85):

Art that interests me has much in common with – belongs to – resistance. It must

⁸ See Introduction for a chronology of Orlan's operation-performances.

challenge our preconceptions, disrupt our thoughts; it is outside the norms, outside the law, against bourgeois order; it is not there to cradle us, to reinforce our comfort, to serve up again what we already know. It must take risks, at the risk of not being immediately accepted or acceptable. It is deviant, and in itself a social project. (*Conference 85*)

During Orlan's seventh surgical intervention the surgery was transmitted to the world beyond the operating theatre. Each spectator, though separated in space, shared a temporal continuum with thousands of others simultaneously viewing Orlan's *Omnipresence*. Here the world was represented as image, "[e]xpanded to encompass any world with all the subjects and objects in it" (Rodowick "Memory of Resistance" 39). How can critical responses engage with these new modes of expression and comprehend the forms of reading they have generated? How can a reading practice be developed that is adequate to the serialism of Orlan's corporeal practice? ⁹ Her profound intention to invent an identity other than that induced by social consensus, with its implied standard-setting gaze, challenges the viewer to be creative in her way and to invent new paths for the ordering of sense or meaning (François "Unimaginable Orlan" 23).

Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* introduces the importance of a philosophy of difference by describing how difference may be internal to the nature of every Idea and how every Idea may have multiple elements which may be differentiated. Conversely, difference may also be external to a conceptual mode of representation, through being actual or virtual, intensive or extensive. For Deleuze situates *difference* as thought in itself, independent of representation which reduces it to the Same (xv). The relevance

⁹ Hence the necessity of an immanent critique.

of *difference* to Orlan's project is that Deleuze conceptualises difference as intensity, explicated by a mode of inquiry or a (creative process) that explores its extensivity, through means of extensivities that are "differentiated". Deleuze uses the term "differentiated" to refer to the determination of the virtual content of an Idea, while the term "differentiation" is used to refer to the actualisation of the content of an Idea as diverging elements and parts. The affect of Orlan's virtual "reality" is that she undermines the repetition of identity with difference, through a "differentiation" or actualisation that corresponds to, without resembling, virtual multiplicities that produce the problem of Woman as Face (212). Orlan achieves this differentiation through a corporeal strategy that makes visible the problem of Woman and Face, while enabling an opening to the future.

The affect of Orlan can be described by the following formula, in which each element is to be read simultaneously: Orlan = difference = will to power = eternal return. This translates in the following broad terms. Orlan, as a result of her deterritorialising of facial features, experiences hostility and opposition in response to the sensation¹⁰ she creates. For Deleuze this opposition or limitation provides a clue, albeit an unacknowledged recognition, of Orlan's capacity to tap into that primal "swarm of differences, a pluralism of free, wild or untamed differences; [an] original space and time, [persisting] alongside the simplifications of imitation and opposition" (*Difference* 50). It is across space and through time that the univocity of the different opposes the identity of opposites (this opposition being Deleuze–Guattari's way of avoiding the dialectic) through the capacity for metamorphoses and transformations. This is the virtual power of becoming which Orlan effectuates in a double movement of the

¹⁰ "[The] sensation depends upon the simple "opinion" of a spectator who determines whether or not to 'materialise' the sensation" (Deleuze, *Philosophy?* 198).

always-already, with the potentiality or what-is-not-yet.

The *eternal formlessness* of the eternal return “makes” the difference. Nietzsche’s formulation of the *eternal return* expels everything that is denying; it eliminates all elements of the negative, the No that cannot pass the test (*Difference* 55). If eternal return is a circle then Difference is at the centre, and the Same (conformity) is placed on the periphery. Paradoxically Orlan, when situated as difference, engenders affirmation through her power that reveals an opening onto Life. Critical negation is in response to, or “in the wake of”, the affirmation that is created through Orlan’s performative intensity – an intensity that contests the very notion of the subject, beyond the second nature of jurisdictions and laws.

Orlan’s *Omnipresence* reveals the fundamental connection between the will to power and eternal return. Orlan’s capacity to define her body in terms of its intensity and its potential for becoming constitutes its “will to power”. This situates both Orlan and the spectator within a Spinozist conception of the body, in terms of the body’s power to be affected, and its power to effect: Hardt observes that the more ways a body can be affected, the more force it has (*Apprenticeship* 54). Orlan’s will to power is manifested in the intensities generated by her “cinematic” surgical performances, and constitutes the manner in which an existing being (Orlan) is filled with immanence, generating eternal return as a temporal synthesis that projects the will to power in time (*Apprenticeship* 55). The extensiveness of Orlan’s cinematic and art images perpetually circulating through a diversity of on-line formats and gallery exhibitions, works to ensure the constant presence of her will to power.

Like every art form, the original will-to-art of the time-image consists of extracting

difference from repetition, by reversing copies into simulacra. For Deleuze, simulacra have broken out of the copy mould and enter different circuits. By copying and subsequent generation of multiple and stylised images that take on a life of their own, Orlan models the simulacra. The purpose of this process is not to become an equivalent of the “model” but conversely to turn against it and the world, in order to open a new space for the simulacrum to affirm its own difference, not as an implosion but a differentiation (Massumi, *Realer Than Real* 2). The serialism of Orlan’s *Reincarnation* works as an example of how all the repetitions of habit, memory and death are conjugated (*Difference* 294). Because everyday life is characterised by repetition – the return of the same primarily through the production of commodities and the proliferation of information – more “art must be injected into it in order to extract from it that little difference which plays simultaneously between other levels of repetition” (293). It is that little difference that gets the whole machinic assemblage of Orlan’s *Reincarnation* functioning.¹¹

Aligned or co-extensive with the will to power (difference) as the first affirmation, eternal return constitutes the second affirmation; “the eternal affirmation of being” where life is taken to the “nth” power. It is along the line of this limit experience that Orlan violently leads the spectator from “the limit of sense to the limit of thought, from what can only be sensed to what can only be thought” (*Difference* 243). When applied to the spectator, the notion of the unthought within thought can be represented as the capacity for thought that exists within each viewer. Orlan both provides and provokes

¹¹ Another example regarding the difference in difference is found in the *Movement-Image*, where Deleuze presents the law of the index – the slight difference in the action which brings out an infinite distance between two situations – in relation to the burlesque / comic skills of both Harold Lloyd and Charles Chaplin. Chaplin, through his selection of gestures that were close to each other, and corresponding situations which were far apart, was able to make the resulting relationship produce an intense emotion at the same time as laughter (170). Žižek also makes use of this idea in *Enjoy Your Symptom* 2)

by means of unreasonable images that offer the power to transform life by revealing new lines or fissures in current ways of thinking and modes of existence. This situates her art as an active force or an active ethic that contributes to an affirmatory power of Life. It is this ontological and creative power of Life that situates Orlan within the ethical principles (active force) of Deleuze's philosophy.¹²

3.1 The "Crack"

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze borrows the novelistic insight of F. Scott Fitzgerald that in life we are traversed and composed by three lines – lines of break, lines of crack and lines of rupture (200). Deleuze's discussion of the crack uses novelists as examples, including Fitzgerald and Zola (*Logic of Sense* 321–333), but art can enact a similar process, posing and solving problems that a particular historical situation entails (Buchanan, "Immanent Historicism" 33). Orlan creates art that simultaneously reacts to and makes visible the consequences and appearances of a life overcoded by formal organisation of order and the subsequent inertia of thought. Orlan's *Reincarnation* provides a working- through of her intention to provoke at the level of recurring and unassimilable images that attain a pure form, relieved of content. Deleuze associates the presence of these elements with the impersonal – the crack. In his articulation of the three syntheses of time – habit, memory and the crack – described by Deleuze as "repetition by excess" (*Difference* 90), it is the third synthesis of time that unites the dimensions of past, present and future, causing them to be played out in pure form (115). Orlan assumes a *double register* (*Logic of Sense* 331) operating as both field and agent, playing out in her open(end)ed face both her own repetitions and instincts and those of the spectator. Orlan constitutes a field of action, making visible the

¹² "Active force" is the active energy that contrasts with what Deleuze terms "Judgment" as the threat to the emergence of any new forms of existence (*Critical and Clinical* 135).

virtually transmitted (deformed) Face of late capitalism, interacting with and against the globally situated and temporal viewing faces of the audience. Her virtual corporealism comprising images of blood, flesh and the wound, constitutes the bolt of lightning that galvanises the disparate elements of her *Reincarnation* into a whole, the crack that simultaneously effects a fracture within the “I”/ eye of the viewer, through creation of the real that has intruded into the symbolic dimension of reality.¹³

It is as if the crack runs through and alienates thought in order to be also the possibility of thought. [I]t is the obstacle to thought, but also the abode and power of thought – its field and agent. (*Logic of Sense* 333)

The goal of Orlan’s art is to provoke both the spectator and contemporary art with images that in turn awaken the power in us to affect and be affected by life. This connection with the outside is power in Spinoza’s sense – the capacity of a body to affect or be affected by change. What Orlan reveals is the potency of subjectivation, where the unity of the One and the prescription of a known and recognisable identity operate not to create a singular identity, but rather to drown such a possibility in the mass of conformity. Orlan provides images that awaken the other in us, by playing out in her own body the drama at work in the social body, implicitly denouncing the horror of it. Critics and spectators have long been exposed to the work of body artists including Gina Paine, Heli Rekula, Karen Finlay, Stelarc and Chris Burden; performance artists who use the medium of their flesh to burn, hook, insert and

¹³ “[T]he crack is that moment when suddenly it becomes clear that even though nothing has actually happened, everything has changed. Nothing is how it used to be, yet the change itself went unfelt. Effectively what the crack indicates is the advent of a new abstract machine, that is to say that a new power of consistency has suddenly been brought into play and it is the job of schizoanalysis to figure out its inner logic” (Buchanan, “Schizoanalysis and Hitchcock” 112).

impale.¹⁴ Massumi comments in relation to the work of Stelarc that if the art commentator is to engage, or even meet half-way the work on its own terms, then rather than imposing an outside frame of judgment on the work, the challenge is to rewrite the rejoining of body and thought that Stelarc (and I have argued Orlan) performs: “This requires a willingness to revisit some of our basic notions of what a body is and does as an acting, perceiving, thinking, feeling, thing” (*Parables* 90).

Orlan’s installation at the ninth Biennale of Sydney (1992) titled “*The Mouth of Europa and the Figure of Venus*” comprised a seven minute montage¹⁵ using four videos projecting images onto the ceiling. Stranded in positions of maximum discomfort, viewers observed confrontational surgical images in conjunction with the screened text of Christ’s words before the Passion: “A little while longer and you will see me no more...a little while longer... and you will see me.” The juxtaposition of rotating text and Orlan’s virtual images created an intensity that enhanced spectatorial anxiety, when confronted with the relentless images and the dissolving or boundary-less aspects of both the text and Orlan’s face. What might be said is that it is only by virtual means (the cinematic apparatus) that one can see the real (namely Orlan’s body). For as Deleuze reminds us, “the virtual is not opposed to the real; it possesses a full reality by itself. The process it undergoes is that of actualization” (*Difference* 211). The Australian commentator Beatrice Faust’s comparison of Orlan’s Biennale installation with the self-mutilation of the then Pentridge inmate Mark “Chopper” Read¹⁶ can be read as a response to the “realness” of Orlan’s virtual images and to trauma resulting

¹⁴ Although Stelarc and Orlan remain as two artists who have continued their challenge to the naturalised body beyond the 70s and into the 80s and 90s.

¹⁵ “The very concept of montage is itself the meaning inbetween, the rupture between the two images, the fissure of intensity created by the juxtaposition” (Lort, *Godard, inbetween Deleuze* 1999).

¹⁶ Beatrice Faust, *Late Night Live*, ABC Radio National, 8th December, 1992.

from the collapse of the distinctions between inner and outer, observer and scene, representations and perception. Orlan makes it impossible to maintain the subject's proper distance with respect to representation, due to her strategy of diffusing boundaries, simultaneously opening and wounding both her body and the body of the observer.

The ostinato of predominantly negative responses to Orlan's *Reincarnation*¹⁷ occurs against the technological, audiovisual and information environment of everyday life where the human / machine boundary has blurred. Humans contemplate and actively engage with the reality of the body as commodity, designed to individual specifications through technology and practices-upon-the-self that emblemise contemporary western cultures. Body-building and contouring, designer babies, skin peels, tissue freezing, liposuction, phallo-plasty, silicone muscle and breast implants and cosmetic surgery constitute a panoply of already existing body modification techniques that interfere with the material body. Given the presumed familiarity with body modification techniques, self-engagement with these techniques as reflected in the current trend for Bo-Tox¹⁸ parties and the technological environment of prosthetised and mediatised contemporary art, what is it about Orlan's corporeal modification and digital design in *Reincarnation* that generates such hostility and outrage?

Opinions, because they are functions of lived experience, "claim to have certain

¹⁷ Although I suggest that Orlan's appearance in Sydney in April 2003, to participate in a Body Modification conference, will generate a response equivalent to a pop-star icon, contrasted with the hysteria that she encountered a decade earlier at the 1992 Biennale of Sydney.

¹⁸ Bo-Tox involves the injection of *Botulinum* toxin to paralyse frown-causing muscles in the face.

knowledge of affections” (*Philosophy* 174). The aim of the artist is to generate insights through the creation of percepts and affects that are “beyond” mere opinion, for opinion is the enemy of thought. The artist as creator and presenter of affects gives them to us and makes us become with them, drawing us into the compound (*Philosophy?* 175). In the *Omnipresence* series – the seventh, eighth and ninth interventions – Orlan departed from conventional aesthetic principles in relation to the composition of the Face to provoke estrangement at the level of affect that “[r]eveals the intolerable, or with an intolerable force, reveals that which used to remain enveloped within ordinary perceptions and affections (lived experience)” (Zourabichvili, “Six Notes on the Percept” 197). *Omnipresence* provides a focus for exploration of the reception and viewing of Orlan’s surgical intervention(s), the relationships between spectators and performer, and finally for consideration of whether Orlan’s *carnal art* succeeds in opening the viewer up to something that is new, unlived and unknown.

3.2 Reception and Viewing of Orlan’s Corporeal Practice

It is November 1993. One hundred artists, critics and dealers assemble in the Sandra Gering Gallery in Soho, New York, to witness an operation-performance titled *Omnipresence*, the seventh in Orlan’s series of surgical interventions. A thirty-six inch monitor captures images from an operating room situated elsewhere in New York City and wall clocks show the time in other world locations. The audience observes a woman’s head resting against a yellow pillow. Her face is marked with purple dots and lines indicating incision and implant locations. A surgeon administers multiple and gruelling injections into Orlan’s neck, lips and cheeks. The skin¹⁹ is used by Orlan as a

¹⁹ At the commencement of each surgical intervention Orlan reads a passage from Eugénie Lemoine Luccioni published in 1983. “Skin is deceiving. In life, one only has one’s skin...”

plastic medium with design possibilities that enable her to shape and mould her own corporeal possibility, to engage in the heretical act of exercising her own will and inventing her own “I” with her “given” corporeal form. Orlan denies the reassurance of identity and defines herself not through her “given” form, but through her capacity for choice. There is a striking resemblance between Orlan’s theatre of the body and the ideas put forward by Artaud in his radio script “To Have Done With the Judgement of God”.²⁰ The BwO is defined by zones of intensity, thresholds, gradients and fluxes – a virtual field of immanence on which the collective and political assemblages make and unmake themselves. It is as though Orlan is corporealising her own Body without Organs, through an act of making and remaking her own body according to her own design and purpose. Orlan’s provocative interference with the lived body, the social body and the body image predictably generates strong spectatorial reactions. It is a rare observer who can watch the surgical performances with equanimity.

In *The Time-Image* Deleuze states: “Give me a body then”, as both a figure of modern cinema and as a formula of philosophical reversal, where the body no longer represents an obstacle to thinking. Rather thought must plunge into the body in order to reach the unthought that is life. For it is the body that forces us to think, and forces us to think what is concealed from thought, where the categories of life are precisely the attitudes of the body, its postures. It is through the body, as distinct from the body as intermediary, that cinema forms its alliance with thought (189). Deleuze’s insistence that the everyday body pass into “the ceremonial body, [through] imposing a carnival or a masquerade” (190) has particular resonance in relation to Orlan. The *Reincarnation* series has been marked by carnivalesque features, including African

²⁰ Artaud, Antonin. “To Have Done with the Judgement of God”. Trans. Helen Weaver, pp 555 – 71 in ed. Susan Sontag, *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

drummers, Indian cinema billboards and signers for the deaf, which although accentuating the provocation of Orlan's open-ended body "also brings out of it a gracious and glorious body, until at last the disappearance of the visible body is achieved" (190). The transition of Orlan's everyday body to a ceremonial body invokes the Brechtian notion of *gest* which is both social and political (194). The significance of the *gest* in relation to Orlan's corporeal art can be understood via Deleuze's suggestion that "the states of the body secrete the slow ceremony which joins together the corresponding attitudes, and develop a female gest which overcomes the history of men and the crisis of the world" (196). Orlan shows the way in which the attitudes of her body are coordinated in the ceremony, not in order to tell, but rather in order to reveal what did not allow itself to be shown (197).

In *Omnipresence*, Orlan directs her gaze to the camera and begins to speak. She speaks in fragments maintaining an audible ostinato of selected texts chosen to provide conceptual commentaries on what is taking place. Technicians operate cameras and lighting, while satellite transmissions simultaneously relay Orlan's performance to sixteen world locations. At this instant Orlan's videoed image presents images or perceptions liberated from the organising structures of everyday life, maximizing its own internal power. The actualisation of the virtual always takes place by difference, and breaks with resemblance as a process and identity as a principle (*Difference* 212). This severance of resemblance and identity is strategically implemented throughout Orlan's *Reincarnation* through the corporeal folding, unfolding and refolding of her face.

3.3 The Fold

At this juncture it is appropriate to introduce Deleuze's concept of the *fold*²¹ as it applies to the multiple elements of Orlan's de- / re-facialisation. Following his reading of Leibniz, Deleuze articulated three aspects of the fold. Firstly the fold represents the multiple as a complexity, irreducible to any single element. Secondly the fold is an anti-dialectical concept of the event, where the event works to enable thought and individuation to "level" each other, denying the dialectical opposition of body and mind and the implied privileging of mind over matter. Finally the fold represents an anti-Cartesian notion of the subject, where notions of interiority are acknowledged then opened out to connect with folding and unfolding of the world: the outside is treated as an exact reversion or "membrane" of the inside replica of the outside (Badiou, "Gilles Deleuze, The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque" 52 – 54). The intertwining of the inside with the outside is imagistically modelled in Fortunatus' purse (or the Möbius strip) sewn so that the outer surface is continuous with its inner surface. The purse envelops the whole world, placing that which is inside, outside and vice versa (*Logic of Sense* 11). This model works to disinvest binary separations, and enable the world to be understood as an immanent series of possibilities and connections. The concept of the fold is relevant to Orlan's Face because it similarly reveals how the elements of her facial dissimulation are incorporated into a continuous movement that deterritorialises the presumed binary separation between the externality of the Face and the domain of the psyche or soul.

Orlan utilises a diversity of inside-out images, effecting a disjuncture between transcendence and principles of immanent individuation. Her visage is enclosed in a mask of billowing gauze and the seep from Orlan's incised face, the intermingling of

²¹ Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley, University of Minnesota Press 1992.

flesh and bone structure, makes visible her presumed interiority. The tactile surfaces of skin and gauze that blend and meld, the silk of the surgeon's Issey Miyake gown, the viscosity of blood, the spill of Orlan's hair onto the pillow and the mirror's refracting surface work together and against each other creating a scene of powerful yet sensual antagonisms: images of continuity from inside to outside.²² Orlan models the three-way process of the fold; firstly the presumed exteriority of her body folds and twists with its interiority, revealing that externality and internality are co-extensive. Secondly themes recur and infold across thirty-five years of Orlan's art practice. Finally the affect of her corporeal art effects an infolding between Orlan and the body of the spectator. The continuity between all the presumed levels of depth and the surface effects are situated in the event of Orlan, with its associated becoming and paradox²³ (*Logic of Sense* 11). Orlan's virtual difference is relational and not limited by already existing forms. Her virtuality generates disjunctions which begin to actualise the tendencies or impact of the original concepts of unity, signifiante and Woman as Face.

A scalpel incises the terrain of her face, prior to cutting away a flap of skin from behind each ear. The ear begins to come away from the face, revealing a space prior to the insertion of implants. Viewers see that the face is detachable and are confronted with the sight of a non-face, described by Parveen Adams' Lacanian reading as "the emptiness of the image".²⁴ At this stage the spectator is confronted by an isomorphic disjunction that destroys the presumed compact between inner and

²² While acknowledging that this description is at odds with Chapter 2, where Orlan is read as an assemblage, this section is included to indicate the potency of images that the spectator encounters during Orlan's *Omnipresence*. I suggest that it is the "cinematic" elements that initially entice the viewer, and the affect of Orlan's infolding and unfolding flesh that disorients and shocks.

²³ "Paradox is initially that which destroys good sense as the only direction, but it is also that which destroys common sense as the assignation of fixed identities." (*Logic of Sense* 3)

²⁴ "The Emptiness of the Image: Psychoanalysis and Sexual Difference." is the title of a collection of essays by Parveen Adams.

outer. Orlan's face is unhinged, and the viewer's illusion that the face "represents" something or signifies an interior is radically destabilised as the melding of Orlan's flesh means that inside and outside cease to be distinguishable. For spectators, an intense vision or affect of *Omnipresence* resides in witnessing the insertion of silicone implants above her eyebrows²⁵ that have been subsequently dubbed (or demonised) as Orlan's "horns".²⁶

Despite all the uplifting, infolding, imploding, incising and raising of flesh, Orlan's skin returns to smoothness. Unlike canvas, skin as material heals, it doesn't remain in a permanently incised or bleeding state. The territory of Orlan's Face has been dissimulated, remoulded and reinscribed, but in the end there is an absence of scarification, no evidence of cicatrised history, unlike tattooing and scarification rituals that leave hyper-pigmented scarring on the skin's surface, the graphics of welts and raised scars that reverberate through their points of intensity, connectivity and desire.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze–Guattari, following Leroi-Gourhan, describe the savage inscription process or territorial representation effected by the conjunction between voice-audition and hand-graphic. An example of this process is the initiation ritual where the marks of a particular tribal or familial alliance are carved into the flesh, constituting a graphic sign system that is read by the eye. Deleuze–Guattari

²⁵ Orlan's "horns" were originally intended for her cheeks, and then inserted in imitation of Mona Lisa's ridged forehead.

²⁶ Suhail Malik observes that 'hybridisation' is too loose and naturalistic a category to explicate the impact of organico-technical milieus. He further signals the problem of "how the general organico-technical milieu that prostheses instanciate and signal is to be recognised, understood and mobilized. And if recognised, in what terms is it to be recognised if the traditional bases for such comprehension are transformed by that very actuality?" ("Between Bodies Without Organs and Machines Without Desire." 36).

formulate the notion of *eye-pain* to account for the role played by the eye which contemplates the face that is speaking and also reads corporeal graphism (188). They suggest that between the code of the mask and the scar, pain is generated “like a surplus value” that is extracted by the eye as a pleasure. (189). These three elements – intoning voice, inscribed body and appreciating eye – are imbricated to form a territory of resonance and retention that constitutes a *theater of cruelty*. Similarly the equivalent elements in the form of Orlan’s intoning voice, the surgeon’s incision and the viewer’s enjoying eye are present in *Omnipresence*, not as a confirmation of the laws of filiation and alliance, but rather to reveal the impact of the signifiatory system and the consequences of compliance in the contemporary environment.

Orlan’s alignment with the “cinematic”, and especially with the time-image, works to impose a blur of voice over a confronting visual image. Orlan creates disequilibrium between the surgeon’s scalpel, the wound’s seepage, her intoning voice and a signer signing for the deaf. The sequence of time is destabilised for the viewer. Time is apprehended as a diverging series of flows, disrupting the supposed harmony or unity of experience (Colebrook *Gilles Deleuze* 70). The transmission of her image via what Rodowick refers to as “an unending temporal stream” (“Reading the Figural” 2) generates new forms of temporal and spatial ordering. For Deleuze the concept of univocity means insisting on the virtual and the actual as fully real: “The virtual is fully real in so far as it is “virtual” (*Difference* 208). While Orlan’s cinematic or virtual presence offers no material presence in itself, Orlan is real, differentiated through the finite yet infinite temporality of her project. This real project in turn differentiates the virtual whole of art.

Representation, when it becomes infinite, generates a sense of *groundlessness*:

“because it has become infinite in order to include difference within itself, [groundlessness is represented] as a completely undifferentiated abyss, a universal lack of difference, an indifferent black nothingness” (*Difference* 276). For viewers this can result in an experience of existential vertigo as one mode of meaning system fails, when an alternate mode has not yet presented itself. It is Orlan’s virtual power of difference that establishes her as “cinematic” in that she generates thought around the spectator’s disorientation or “ungrounding”. It is in this space of ontological uncertainty that critics and spectators, through misunderstanding and hostility, resort to dismissive descriptors as they scramble to deny and repress, or fail to engage with Orlan’s constant process of re-imag(in)ing. An example of a body responding to body is provided by a woman who announced: “You are the sickest person I’ve ever met”, at Orlan’s 1994 presentation at London’s Institute of Contemporary Art, “It makes me want to give you a good slap” (cited in Ince, *Millennial Female* 43).

The spectator is both necessary for and implicated in producing and maintaining the affect of Orlan. Orlan’s *Reincarnation* project has generated both fame and scandal. A plethora of academic publications (Adams 1996); (Phelan 1998); (Ince 2000); art criticism, (Rose 1993); (Onfray 1996); (Moos 1996); (Goodall 1999) and television (*Arena*, BBC 1995); (*South Bank Show* 1998) have been produced in response to Orlan’s carnal art. These responses circulate and generate additional comment through critique, on-line image banks, journalistic sensationalism and Orlan’s in-person appearances. Orlan’s performative strategy invites and assumes the viewer’s “entranced revulsion” (Ince *Millennial* 43) and consenting voyeurism. The stages of spectatorship are both invited and implied, and the viewer’s face is necessary if the incoherence of Orlan’s face is to spill onto the audience, implicating them in the processes of force and affect.

Orlan's performance(s) are organised around sophisticated feedback systems of echoing and self-generating images that continually replicate across a diversity of contexts (historical, religious and psychoanalytic), modes (electronic and digital imaging) and genres (surgical interventions, corporeal installations and reliquaries). Orlan's corporeal excess – subcutaneous fat, liquefied flesh and blood-stained gauze was used to create reliquaries and installations for gallery display and sold to finance future operations. In the series of reliquary tablets titled *The text, my flesh and the Languages* (Penine Hart Gallery 1993) twenty grams of flesh was encased in resin, and enclosed in a welded frame – providing an impression of inviolability – with text of the same passage by Michel Serres,²⁷ *Le Tiers-Instruit*, inscribed on bullet proof glass. Each reliquary was replicated in different languages until the supply of flesh was exhausted, highlighting the relationship between flesh and the word, suggesting that the productivity of her body is being measured against the capacity of language to describe and represent it.

What is important throughout Orlan's *Reincarnation* is her anticipation and use of the regime of signs including capitalism, subjectivity, art history, medical technology and corporatism. Orlan precipitates these sign regimes into movement or flight on a plane of immanence, determined by relations of speed and slowness. The plane of consistency knows nothing of subjects, but only *haecceities*, where intensities combine into an individuation absent of a subject or a thing. The (im)proper name

²⁷ "The current tattooed monster, ambidextrous, hermaphroditic and mulatto, what can it make us see, now, under its skin? Yes, blood and flesh. Science speaks of organs, functions, of cells and molecules, only to admit at last that it's high time we stopped speaking of life in laboratories; but science never mentions the flesh, which, quite rightly, signifies the conflation, here and now, in a specific site of the body, of muscles and blood, skin and hair, bones, nerves and diverse functions, that inextricably binds that which pertinent knowledge analyses" (*Conference 92*).

Orlan functions in this way – comprising an individuation through non-subjectified affects and percepts which enter into virtual conjunction with all elements of the assemblage that marks both a process of becoming and an event.

Affect differs from a concept's ordering or sequencing of thinking. The power of affect is to interrupt or disrupt synthesis and order. Orlan's provocative strategy challenges the spectator to think beyond what her viscosity and usage of the interconnected elements of wound, text and word means, to what it does. Negative spectator response indicates a revulsion born of seeing Orlan's deliberate tampering with, and denial of, the established order. This constitutes a paradox, given that presumably the same viewers are dictated to by an image culture that both demands and sustains the iconic and the beautiful. Orlan's *Reincarnation* models a *complicated formality* that systematically deterritorialises the signification of Woman as Face, actively revealing the problem of the image and its tyrannical hold. She achieves this through her appropriation of Renaissance art and the subsequent disordering of selected facial elements to reveal the world here and now, in which we live. Orlan's strategic incorporation of medical, cinematic and multi-media technologies marks Orlan as different to us. Our resulting helplessness in the face of Orlan's image both contributes to and sustains viewer alienation.

In the *Omnipresence* series Orlan's Face is presented as a non-face, multiple and shifting, created from different visions and competing imaginings. The territory of the Face is simultaneously the most concrete and the most abstract thing we come to know. It is in this terrain of facial paradox – both its presence and its absence – that Orlan operates, leaving the viewer stranded in a zone of *indistinction* or *indiscernibility* or affect (Deleuze, *Philosophy?* 173). In the chaos of Orlan's Face –

her intoning voice, the scalpel's probe beneath the flesh and the blur of red – language and meaning frames disintegrate. Orlan exploits the gap where language fails to explicate the effect of what is being observed. There is a level of sophistication in the work that requires a response other than dismissal, trivialisation, resorting to metaphor, or the tendency of psychoanalytic responses to “[g]ive forbidden objects to itemised affections or substitute simple ambivalences for zones of indetermination” (Deleuze *Philosophy?* 174). Each spectator potentially reaches the zone where it is no longer possible to distinguish themselves from the virtual conjunction that is Orlan's open(ed) face. It is at this moment, that what can only be sensed “moves the soul, ‘perplexes’ it” (*Difference* 140).

Initially Orlan appears as abject, because of a viscosity that the viewer is unable to subjugate or incorporate. One reason is that Orlan replaces the presumed organic Face with an abstraction. Deleuze observes that “the organic body is prolonged by straight lines that attach it to what lies in the distance, [accounting for] the primacy of human beings, or of the face” (*Plateaus* 498). The organic is contrasted with the abstract,²⁸ an inorganic nomadic line that is in free action and swirling: “it is inorganic yet alive, all the more alive for being inorganic” (498). In this temporary autonomous zone of *near legibility*²⁹ and stressed faciality, the territory between becomes more visible. Orlan and the spectator encounter each other and lose their texture as subjects, not because everything is organised and organic, but rather

²⁸ “What then should be termed *abstract* in modern art? A line of variable direction that describes no contour and delimits no form...” (*Plateaus* 499). While Deleuze situates his discussion of the abstract line in the context of modern art, it seems that the concept can similarly be applied to Orlan's non-face. See also the discussion in relation to the function of the abstract machine in chapter Two.

²⁹ Marshall McLuhan observes that Orlan works in the territory of “near legibility” – the space of neither this nor that. (Allucquère Roseanne Stone, “Speaking of the Medium: Marshall McLuhan Interviews” in *This is my body...this is my software* 46)

because Orlan's corporeal strategy reveals the possibility of a life that is "inorganic, germinal and intensive, a powerful life without organs" (*Plateaus* 499).

Each element of Orlan's performative strategy is designed to disrupt the space of epistemological certainty and destabilise the viewer's certainty – engendered through the discourse(s) of historicity, religion and psychoanalysis – that the Face signifies a unified self. The deterritorialisation of Orlan's facial features in conjunction with the virtual transmission of her self-chosen image enables Orlan's Face to connect with other Faces in other places in a multiplicity of ways. The affect of Orlan is to dissipate the coherence of a Self or an Ego, for what Orlan is ultimately between is ourselves as ourselves and ourselves as others. Viewers are no longer co-extensive with themselves, unable to incorporate the un-formedness of Orlan's Face and by extension her becoming, and the capacity for becoming of the audience. This is the movement to another form of thinking, beyond an identity that "freezes the gesture of thinking [and] pays homage to an order" (de Certeau, *Heterologies* 194). What Orlan achieves is a formulation of what in a sense is Deleuze's most important question: "What does it take to make us think?" Orlan's radical corporeality makes the spectator *think* the difference between the affectivity of her images that assault the sense of many viewers, and the conceptual responses and ordering given to her images. Orlan denies the observer the "interested and organised movement that is mapped by the eye as it finds its way home, [or] marks out those objects it will choose and grasp" (Colebrook *Deleuze* 35).

3.4 New Unlived and Unknown

In the *Time-Image* Deleuze offers a parallel with Orlan's cinematic affect when he describes a purely optical and aural situation that:

[m]akes us grasp. It is supposed to make us grasp, something intolerable and unbearable. It is not a matter of scenes of terror, although there are sometimes corpses and blood. It is a matter of something too powerful, or too unjust, or sometimes also too beautiful, which [o]utstrips our sensory-motor capacities.

(18)

For many viewers Orlan's images are unbearable, that is, inseparable from revelation and illumination, "as from a third eye" with the "[c]inema becoming, no longer an undertaking of recognition, but of knowledge, [f]orcing us to forget our own logic and retinal habits" (18). The limit-situation of Orlan's mutable Face can be aligned with the unbearable and the intolerable, but one which the spectator is capable of evading or turning away. Deleuze cites Bergson's observation that the viewer has affective schemata and perceives only what it is in [their] interests to perceive "[b]y virtue of [their] economic interests, ideological beliefs and psychological demands" (20). However, if the viewer's sensory-motor schemata jam, then a different type of image can appear.

Orlan, when situated as an equivalent of the time-image, effectuates a Nietzschean "time-out-of joint" sense, that can be equated with the triple reversal of the time-image which defines a beyond of movement. Firstly her image is not an action-image, since any narrative unfolding based on character and story is absent. Instead Orlan manifests as a pure optical, aural (and tactile) image directly connected to a time-image that has subordinated movement. This reversal means that "time is no longer the measure of movement but movement is the perspective of time" (*Time-Image* 22), situating Orlan in the realm of the virtual, which is real. The image has to be "read" as well as seen – both readable and visible. Orlan's corporeal image has the potential to open up powerful and direct revelations through activating the time-image, the readable image

and the thinking image. Because she is not operating at the level of metaphor, Orlan's aggressive reterritorialisation challenges the spectator's reliance on metaphor to formulate a response. The inadequacy of critical responses to Orlan's "kinematic" performances indicates a failure of linguistic systems to respond to the limit-experience at the level of agency – Orlan enacting both the composition and manipulation of her own materiality. Apart from affirming the Australian corporeal artist Stelarc's claim "that the body is obsolete", Orlan's art can also be situated with Stelarc's as an "art of sensation". Massumi equates sensation with the direct registering of potential, as a "pole of thought-perception":

Sensation is an extremity of perception. It is the immanent limit at which perception is eclipsed by a sheerness of experience, as yet unextended into analytically ordered, predictably reproducible, possible action. Sensation is a state in which action, perception, and thought are so intensely, performatively mixed that their in-mixing falls out of itself. (*Parables* 97)

For some viewers an extended period of witnessing Orlan's viscosity enables them to think otherwise about their own corporeality, and specifically about the problem of their own addiction to the image. This possibility does not obviate the scandal of Orlan – her refusal to be dictated to by an image culture, and her seeking to subvert its tyrannical hold through total control over the design and concept of her own image (Goodall "An Order of Pure Decision" 160).

The artist develops the methods and materials necessary for this undertaking, enabling a potential transfer from one state to another where the affect is a "question only of ourselves here and now" (*Philosophy?* 174). The task and achievement of Orlan's art is the creation of a violence that shatters and carries the spectator into an

a-subjective, that is a singular and impersonal becoming-other, registering a tendency to *come-to-be- in-the-world*³⁰ (Massumi, *Parables* 97) or the power that enables the spectator to think and live differently. This is the ethical task of philosophy – to free us from the constraints of common sense, allowing us to become towards the future:

The more our daily life appears standardized, stereotyped and subject to an accelerated reproduction of objects of consumption, the more art must be injected into it in order to extract from it that little difference which plays simultaneously between the other levels of repetition. [Art] aesthetically reproduces the illusions and mystifications which make up the real essence of this civilization, in order that Difference may at last be expressed with a force of anger which is itself repetitive and capable of introducing the strangest selection, even if this is only a contraction here and there – in other words a freedom for the end of the world. (*Difference* 293)

³⁰ My emphasis.

Conclusion

Orlan and the Becoming of Art

“Real art has the capacity to make us nervous.” (Susan Sontag, *Against Interpretation*)

This dissertation situates Orlan as a concept-event operating in and against the problem of a representational culture that portrays the body as ideal and seamless. Implicit in Orlan’s creative practice is the question of how her art can be perceived in relation to contemporary art’s ontology of the body, which is situated in and against global capitalism’s endless proliferation and commodification of the image. I suggest that Orlan’s art can be viewed as “utopian” in the sense that Orlan can be understood as a philosophic concept linking philosophy with its own epoch and becoming political (Deleuze, *Philosophy?* 99–100). This is not to align Orlan’s oeuvre with prophecies of the future or utopias of transcendence. Rather it is to read her art as a way of looking at concepts, ideas and forms which create and make productive, innovative, experimental and provocative connections by enacting an aesthetics which endows creative force with political virtue (Conley, “From Multiplicities to Folds” 263).

Orlan’s sphere of art production and reception draws upon and uses her own corporeality as the site / sight that enacts and deterritorialises an extensive assemblage of themes and techniques including representational art, performance, theatre, literary texts and medical and imaging technologies: an assemblage of possible fields, of virtual as well as constituted elements. The intensities of her affects are situated alongside witty, impertinent allusions to the process of cosmetic

modification. “Am I not pretty?” she quipped to her global audience during the *Omnipresence* intervention. The imbrication of these elements contributes to Orlan’s auto-production or *autopoiesis*, which defamiliarises the totalising notion of a stable subjectivity and an unproblematically given female identity.

Orlan’s art cannot be viewed in isolation, but has rather to be viewed in relation to social and ideological conditions against which it defines itself. These conditions include the pervasive dominance of the Image which reduces Woman to Face. Orlan instigates a process by which her image becomes an-other, in order to make the Image become. This is Orlan’s art, to make perceptible, through the creation of percepts, “the imperceptible forces that populate the universe and make us become” (Deleuze *Philosophy?* 182). Orlan’s “refrain” comprises more than the obviousness of her incised and bleeding flesh. Her refrain is the circulation of known images resonating with the generation and affects of new and continuing images,¹ new images that incarnate in space and through time, lines of flight that pass across and through the assemblage of art, in order to open experience onto an-other universe. Orlan reclaims and re-inhabits subjectivised space at the level of thought through the affect produced by incomprehensible images that are fully antagonistic and can’t be incorporated or reduced into the state of affairs or signifying systems. Her consequent challenge to the body of contemporary art, through her creation of a self-conscious other-feminine subject, is to keep thinking about it.

If art has to do with creating new experiences then Orlan makes violent and creative use of representational art through the appropriation and inversion of Old Masters’ portrayals of the ideal woman. Orlan achieves this inversion through effecting a

¹ See Chapter 2 for reference to Orlan’s *Refiguration hybridation* series no 1 (1997 -)

becoming-minor of the face, repeating the Renaissance tradition in order to transform that tradition. Her strategy of repetition can effect a renewal by creating a questioning space in the face of her self-willed refusal to remain the same. Orlan's repetition of parts, segments, wholes of repetition, and her recycling of materials, constitutes an essential feature of her serial re-presentation throughout the *Reincarnation* series (Ince *Millennial* 62).

Across her thirty-five year oeuvre Orlan has worked to create and reveal the power of *difference* in order to create alternate ways of thinking. What she produces is a corporeal art practice that presents and produces difference in order to think differently, to become different and to create differences; a becoming of permanent change through the experience of difference. Antipathetic responses to Orlan's art, which constitute a recurring theme through this dissertation, are indicative, firstly of a resistance to Orlan's invitation to spectators to think difference for themselves. Secondly they are an indication of the need to contain or restrain the scandal of Orlan's facial deterritorialisation within what I will characterise as the ontological premise of contemporary art. Hardt and Negri situate ontology not as theory of foundation, but rather as theory of the individual's immersion in being, and the constant construction of that being (*Labour of Dionysus* 286.7). Their conception of ontology situates ontology as a process, rather than a preformed order, where "the conception of being must be open to the production of the discontinuous, to the unforeseeable, to the event" (286.7). Orlan's art can be read as Spinozist in that it recognises the growth of being as an assemblage. Deleuze–Guattari echo this formulation with their insistence that the aim of art is to generate percepts and affects that open up our everyday lives beyond mere opinion or existing forces to something that is *new, unlived and unknown* (*Philosophy?* 174). This capacity of art to move

towards what Life might *become* in order that life may be lived more affirmatively can be aligned with Deleuze's positioning of philosophy as an ethics of *amor fati* – the love of life – where we create and select those powers that expand life as a whole. The paradox of Orlan's double wounding of both her self and the spectator is that she enables the spectator to think and see that Life can be lived affirmatively, that Life is greater than the corporeal and incorporeal wounding which is the affective result of conformist closure.

Orlan's extreme materiality produces an orientation or direction for thinking that provides art and the viewer with the opportunity to consider the body as a new image of what it is to think. When applied to her total body, the process of Orlan's *Reincarnation* enables the body of contemporary art to look and think differently about the body of art and the body of the world. Orlan elaborates a differently conceived or nomad subjectivity. Orlan, through an art of alternate becoming, models an ontology of univocity that firstly makes visible genetic, historical and familial differences that traverse and constitute each individual, while actively deterritorialising these elements to show that we need not be held by their definition and dictates once and for all (Colebrook *Gilles Deleuze* 96). The challenge to critics and audiences of Orlan's art is her modeling of an immanent becoming on a plane of composition which refers to the intensity of an attribute, not its characteristics. Her art reveals woman-ness, not woman; skin-ness, not skin; and face-ness, not face: attributes which are resistant to aesthetic totalisation. However, an immanent critique is needed in order to see this.

Orlan provokes art to think beyond its current concerns and theorisations. She re-invents the term by disrupting the everyday and the opinionated. The effect of Orlan

is to render contemporary art contemporaneous and align it with the potential for thought when set alongside and placed within other forms of thought. While Orlan's art practice does not formulate rules for contemporary art, some concrete rules² can be inferred from the uncomprehending responses to Orlan's corporeal projects. Such responses confirm the circular reterritorialising repetitions of discursive frameworks itemised by philosophy and psychoanalysis, and I would suggest, contemporary art.

Concrete Rule 1: The Psychoanalytic Lure

Contemporary art spectators are susceptible to the discourse of psychoanalysis.

Lucy Lippard, writing in *Art in America* (May / June 1976) observed how American and European female body art is variously received as "narcissistic, exhibitionistic or, [c]aught in the psychoanalytic mechanisms of a return to infantilism because of an inability to separate from mother, or subject from object" (Deepwell, "Pains and Pleasures" 40). Similarly the French medical journal *VST* devoted an entire issue to Orlan in 1991 and reproduced Orlan's psychiatric report filed by Dr O. Relandt (Ince *Millennial* 134):

The main diagnosis made is of 'artistic monomania', with secondary observations of extreme narcissism, depressive tendencies, and a 'pathology of freedom' (freedom from the identity – name and image – conferred upon her by her family and upbringing). [Her] 'condition' is quite compatible with the exercising of a profession, and not a source of danger to anyone except herself.

(Fn 2 cited in Ince (*Millennial* 134))

Such a diagnosis echoes Deleuze's complaint against Plato, Freud and Lacan who conceived of desire as ontology of lack or negativity, in contrast with the tradition

² This term accords with the use of concrete rules for determining the hermeneutic of the assemblage in Chapter 2. The notion of "concrete rules" also parallels Deleuze–Guattari's use of the term in their conclusion to *A Thousand Plateaus*, 501–514.

extending from Spinoza to Deleuze where desire is situated as productive. For Spinoza, reality does not prohibit desire, but is produced by it. Desire operates as a force of production, creating things, making alliances and forging interactions. Spinozist desire is pure positivity and production, figured in the Deleuze–Guattari concept of rhizomatics.

Each surgical intervention in the *Reincarnation* series commences with Orlan reading from “The Skin”, written by the Lacanian analyst Eugénie Lemoine-Luccioni. Is she offering the psychoanalytic lure? Even if she isn’t, why are commentators unable to enquire beyond the obvious psychoanalytic construct when reading Orlan’s art? Such a failure indicates a double addiction, not only to the signifying realm of psychoanalysis but also to our contemporary habit of reading images through ego-constitutive frameworks of the mirror and the gaze.

Parveen Adams’s Lacanian reading of Orlan’s *Omnipresence* employs the Lacanian framework of sexual relations to elucidate Orlan’s work, situating the woman’s body as phallic. Adams’s reading engages with Orlan’s statement in *Conference* that she is “doing a woman-woman transsexualism”.³ Adams endorses Orlan’s description, comparing her surgical self-invention to the gender reassignment of male-female transsexuals. Adams aligns refiguration through gender reassignment as an attempt to avoid psychosis, involving an “omnipotent denial of sexual difference as such, [n]ot to become a woman, but to become the Woman” (Adams “Operation Orlan” 144). According to Lacan’s theory of femininity, universal female subjectivity is unattainable, and this is why he crosses out the definite article – the “La” of “La

³ “I say that I am doing a woman-woman transsexualism by alluding to transsexuals: a man who feels himself to be a woman wants others to see: woman. We could summarise this by saying that it is a problem of communication” (Orlan 1996).

Femme". For Lacan "The Woman" is an identity, only available to persons of either sex in fantasy. To occupy the position of Woman means becoming the phallus, achieving the authority of sexual identity conferred by the phallic signifier. In Lacanian terms the desire to be the Woman is connected with avoiding psychosis.

An alternate reading of Orlan's "transsexualism" statement is that she is offering a provocation that she knows will "lure" psychoanalytic theorists and practitioners. Orlan reveals the painful consequences of the demands to become-woman situated against the contradictions inherent, firstly in woman's attempts to inhabit a culturally circulated desired image which remains unachievable for most women, and secondly in being denied access to her own subjectivity except through the construct of the Lacanian phallus. Through revealing the reality of becoming a woman, the effect of Orlan is to function at the level of the real and of life. She models the possibility for a woman-to woman-transsexualism that enables an-other woman to become, by overcoming the constraints of psychoanalytic discourse.

In 1978 Orlan performed a piece at the Musée S. Ludwig, Aix-la-Chapelle entitled *Documentary Study: the Head of Medusa* – a performance that indicated her familiarity with the Freudian–Lacanian concept of the phallic woman. Half of Orlan's pubic hair was painted blue and viewed through a large magnifying glass. Video monitors showed the heads of spectators arriving, viewing and leaving. Freud's text *Head of the Medusa* was handed out at the exit, stating: "At the site of the vulva even the devil runs away" (*Conference* 84). A consequence of Orlan's *Medusa* was to effectively deconstruct phallic spectatorship.⁴

⁴ A similar and more confronting defamiliarisation of phallic spectatorship that engages elements of the phallic in both objective and symbolic terms is Valie Export's "Actionhose:

Employing Lacan's notion that the Woman is only available in fantasy, it could be argued that in the *Reincarnation* series, Orlan is inverting or appropriating the fantasy through surgically incorporating onto her own face parts of women's images fantasised by Renaissance Old Masters. The computer-template that guides the surgeon's intervention, in conjunction with Orlan's body of work and its recycling and repeating of refrains and images, actively resists attempts to align Orlan's body of art with any theory of female subjectivity determined by a universalist and phallogocentric concept of the Woman. In fact Orlan's open-ended subjectivity defamiliarises the subject Woman and actively deconstructs the notion that such a concept can actually exist.

Concrete Rule 2: Contemporary Art and the Ontological Premise

Along with other modes of agency that occupy natural, historical or social milieus, it can be argued that contemporary art operates on the premise that being is constituted via encounters with the discontinuous and the unforeseeable through aesthetic production. Contemporary art achieves this position through its inclusion of art experimentation that breaks with convention. Paradoxically the very power of art experimentation, and any challenge such experimentation may pose to systems of representation, is of limited duration because of its potential for assimilation into the "infinitely flexible institution of art" (Felski, "Aesthetics and the Feminist Public Sphere" 159). Any art that expresses radicality or difference, that aims to shatter complacencies of feeling and reception, risks being disarmed, neutralised and drained

Genital Panik" 1969) which shows a leather clad Export sitting on a wooden bench clasping a sub-machine gun and revealing her exposed pubic area. (Deepwell, "Pains and Pleasures" 42)

of its power to disturb by co-optation. Robert Hughes observes the phenomenon of assimilation in the 1980s gallery-collector “art investment mania” for graffiti art produced by Jean-Michel Basquiat (“Requiem for a Featherweight” 308–312). Contemporary art’s ontological premise involves the absorption of art as commodity so that it comes to embody a new aesthetic norm, both at the level of production and reception: repetition rather than difference. It repeats and recirculates elements and parts that don’t open out onto an affirmation of difference but rather recycle the repetitions in recognisable and sellable formats.

Orlan’s art challenges contemporary art which both includes alternate art (as evidenced by its obsession for novelty) and excludes it, as seen in the denial and trivialisation of Orlan’s radical corporeality. The confrontational nature of the *Reincarnation* series meant that it was tentatively included, but because it refused easy assimilation was later excluded in an attempt to contain the scandal. The subsequent ready-to-wear-alliance between contemporary art and fashion is exemplified by the response of the Antwerp-based designer Walter Van Beirendock (W<), who paid homage to Orlan in one of his *défilés* by making up his models with bumps on their foreheads to resemble the “horns” surgically inserted into Orlan’s forehead during *Omnipresence* (Ince, *Millennial* 23). Despite appropriations and alliances such as this, which work to gradually absorb and render dissident work acceptable, I suggest that Orlan continues to disturb the parameters of contemporary art by being-other than the ephemeral art practices that are required to stoke the market.

Orlan's current MARS project, which works with the metals and technical apparatus of Russian space modules⁵ indicates a 'shift from corporeal to machinic assemblages that can only be assimilated if the body of contemporary art catches up with her current artistic direction.

The double standard of contemporary art's ontological premise is intrinsic to the extreme response to Orlan's *Reincarnation*, which is her manifestation of a disturbance to being for the body of contemporary art emphasising as it does the relationship between image and art, contrasted with the image of art. Orlan creates an ongoing provocation to "art" as an order-word, revealing its implicit failure to bring out the order-word in the order-word, the revolutionary potential inherent in the word "art". She inverts "art" creating a pass-word. Deleuze–Guattari comment that pass-words exist beneath order-words, where they are "words that pass, words that are components of passage, whereas order-words mark stoppages or organized, stratified compositions" (*Plateaus* 110). The virtual-actual entity Orlan can be situated as a pass-word, through an art practice that doesn't flee, but creates lines of flight that similarly transform the composition of order into a component of passage.

Concrete Rule 3: Chaosmosis and the New Aesthetic Paradigm

Deleuze–Guattari conceives of philosophy as the invention of concepts which "express" and respond to events. In their view the task of philosophy is to extract an event from things in order to give a new event, through the creation of concepts. As a concept-event Orlan enables an engagement with the events of everyday social and political reality in order to challenge received ideas about the nature of those events.

⁵ *Orlan glove wrist disconnect components* – February 20, 2002. See http://spacecraft.ssl.umd.edu/SSL/SSL_photos/project_photos/MARS/o20220.Orlan/Orlan.index.html

For example, Orlan's creation of a non-face works firstly to emphasise the construction and continuous circulation of banal images of woman by new Medias. Secondly her deterritorialised face draws attention to the potency of and addiction to these images by both men and women. Finally her face alerts people to the efforts women make in order to become these images. Patton comments that events are structurally complex and are always composed of other events, both internally and through their relations to other events ("The World Seen From Within" 1). Similarly I suggest that the event of Renaissance art, across a five-hundred year old history, maintains a potency that works to structure and condition contemporary notions of and responses to the ideal image.⁶

Orlan appropriates representational art in order to show what is possible when selected Renaissance artists and their reproductions of facial features are placed in conjunction with other domains of thought, including technology, philosophy, cinema, corporeal art and language. The event of Orlan reveals the impact of Renaissance imaging and imagining of women and affirms Deleuze's formulation, conceptualised in *Difference and Repetition* and *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, that the past (Renaissance art) and future (Orlan) are both dimensions of the present. We are never free from thoughts of the past, propelled into the future. By appropriating and surgically mixing Renaissance facial elements with her own features, the effect of Orlan's art is firstly to disinvest fantasy and secondly to create a becoming-face of her own design and purpose. Rather than representing a pathology, Orlan's body of work constitutes an indictment of contemporary art and its collusion with social

⁶ Orlan's plan to commission an advertising agency to conduct a world-wide competition to re-name the Reincarnated Orlan is a strategy designed to show the complicity between the media and society, in relation to the production of and addiction to the image.

forces that work to maintain a particular image of woman. She inverts these forces in order to generate an art practice that is productive, mutative and creative.

As an artist Orlan actively produces percepts and affects arising out of subjectivities of a lived experience (social and historical) in order to engage with the chaos of contemporary times and wrest a new affect that works to create both an alternate way of becoming and to condition art. Through becoming a non-face, Orlan effects a crack in the symbolic order – after seeing her, nothing can be the same as before. James Joyce identified art not as chaos but a composition of chaos “that yields the vision or sensation, so that it constitutes [a] chaosmosis, a composed chaos – neither forseen nor preconceived” (*Philosophy?* 204).

Orlan, through a thirty-five year re-incarnation, has generated a body of work that reveals, comments on and inserts itself into a social fabric that either appropriates, rejects or celebrates her chaosmosis. Through techniques of suture and rupture, she has achieved a role as a provocateur, detaching and deterritorialising successive elements of philosophy, science and art in order to refuse the conformist closure of subjectivity. The achievement of Orlan, experienced in an encounter with the event of Orlan, is her creation of art that reclaims and re-inhabits another space, recreating and reinventing a subject through an experience of difference, engaging in thought within the realm of an alternate possible. Her *Reincarnation* models what it takes to become a woman, in order that a becoming-woman through difference and of difference may be realised.

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Figure 2.	‘Baiser de l’artiste / The Kiss of the Artist’ or automatic distribution, 5F performance at the FIAC (Foire internationale d’art contemporain), Paris 1976. Black and white photo, 110cm x 170cm.
Figure 3.	‘White Madonna in Assumption’ on video monitor and clouds of bubble wrap, 1984. Cibachrome, 110 cm x 165cm. Photo by AECP photo school.
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- Figure 8 ‘The Second Mouth’, 7th operation-performance ‘Omnipresence’, New York, 21 November 1993. Cibachrome in diasec vacuum, 165cm x 110cm. Photo by Vladamir Sichov for SIPA Press.
- Figure 9 ‘Refiguration hybridation’, series no 1, 1997. Printing and technical assistance by Pierre Zovilé for the Montreal video festival “Champlibre”.
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- Figure 11 ‘The text, my flesh and the languages...’ soldered metal and burglar proof glass, 10 g of flesh encased in resin, 0.75 m x 1.05m x 0.10m. Text ‘Le Tiers-Instruit by Michel Serres, Penine Hart Gallery, New York, 1993.
- Figure 12 ‘Orlan Glove Wrist Disconnect Components’, MARS Project 2002.



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Figure 2.

Baiser de l'artiste / The Kiss of the Artist or automatic distribution, 5F performance at the FIAC (Foire internationale d'art contemporain), Paris 1976. Black and white photo, 110cm x 170cm.



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Figure 5 Blood and photo-transfer on gauze reliquary. Reliquary from the 7th surgical operation, 1993.



Figure 6 Finger drawing in blood done during the 8th surgical intervention, 1993. 100cm x 70cm.

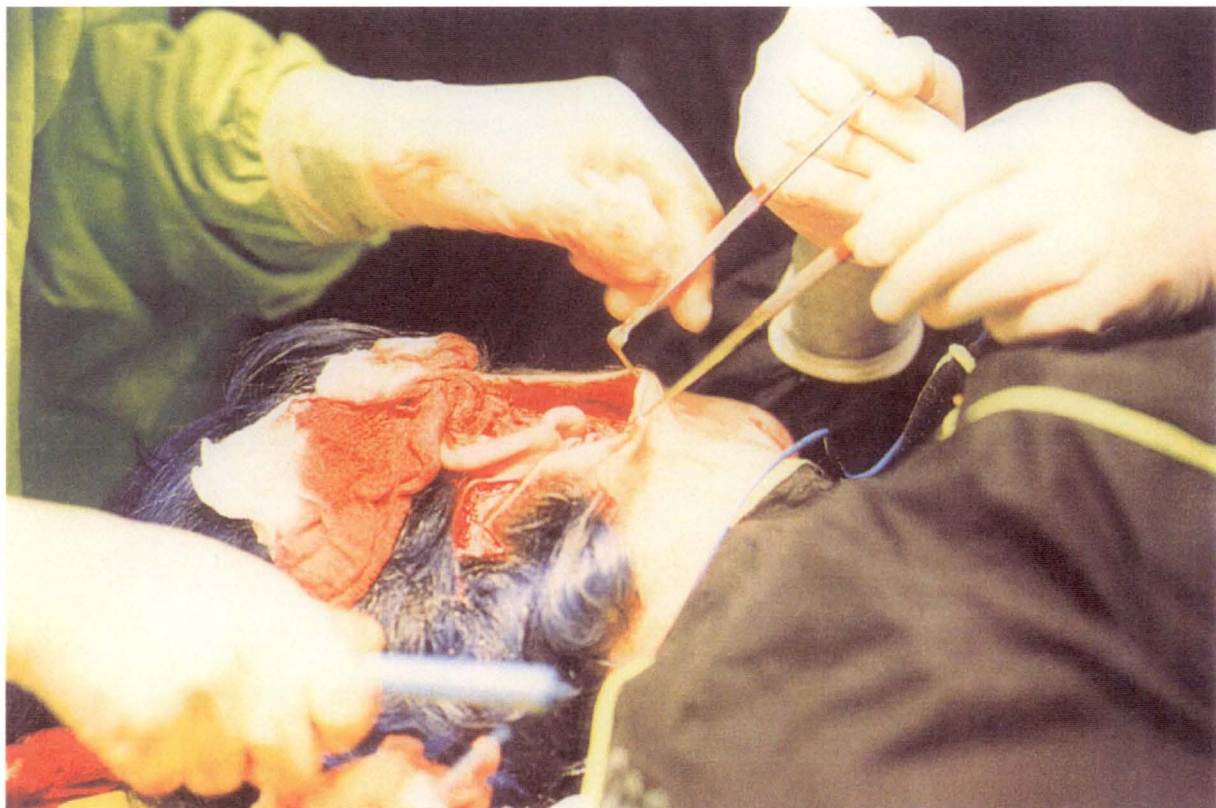


Figure 7 Close-up in red, blue and green on the opening of the body during the 7th operation-performance 'Omnipresence', New York, 21 November 1993. Cibachrome in diasec vacuum, 165cm x 110cm. Photo by Vladamir Sichov for SIPA Press.



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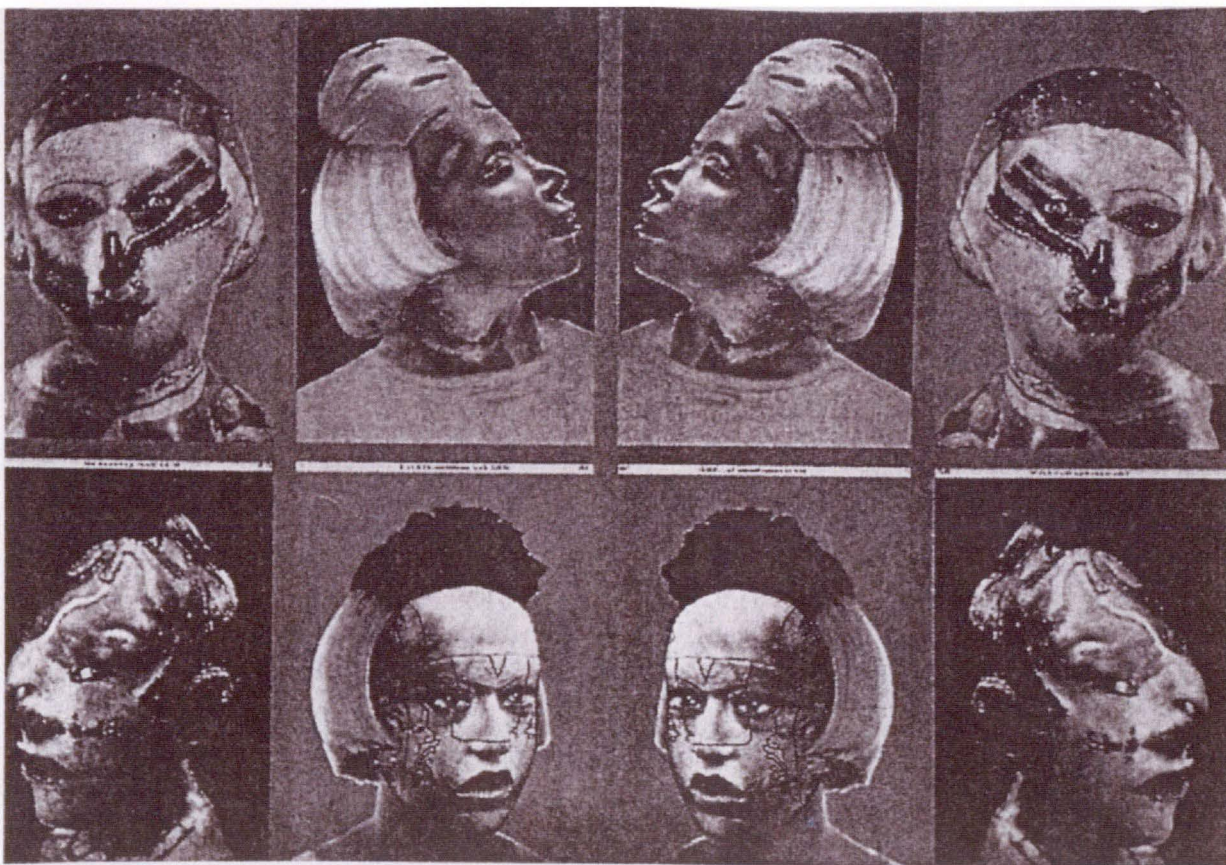
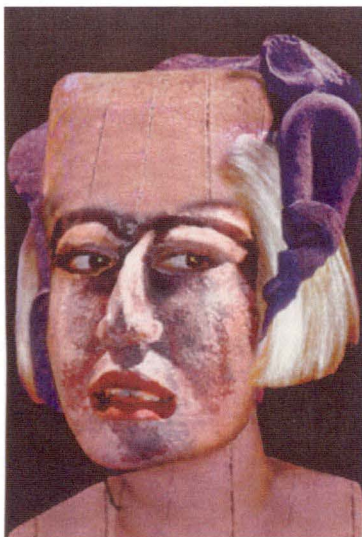


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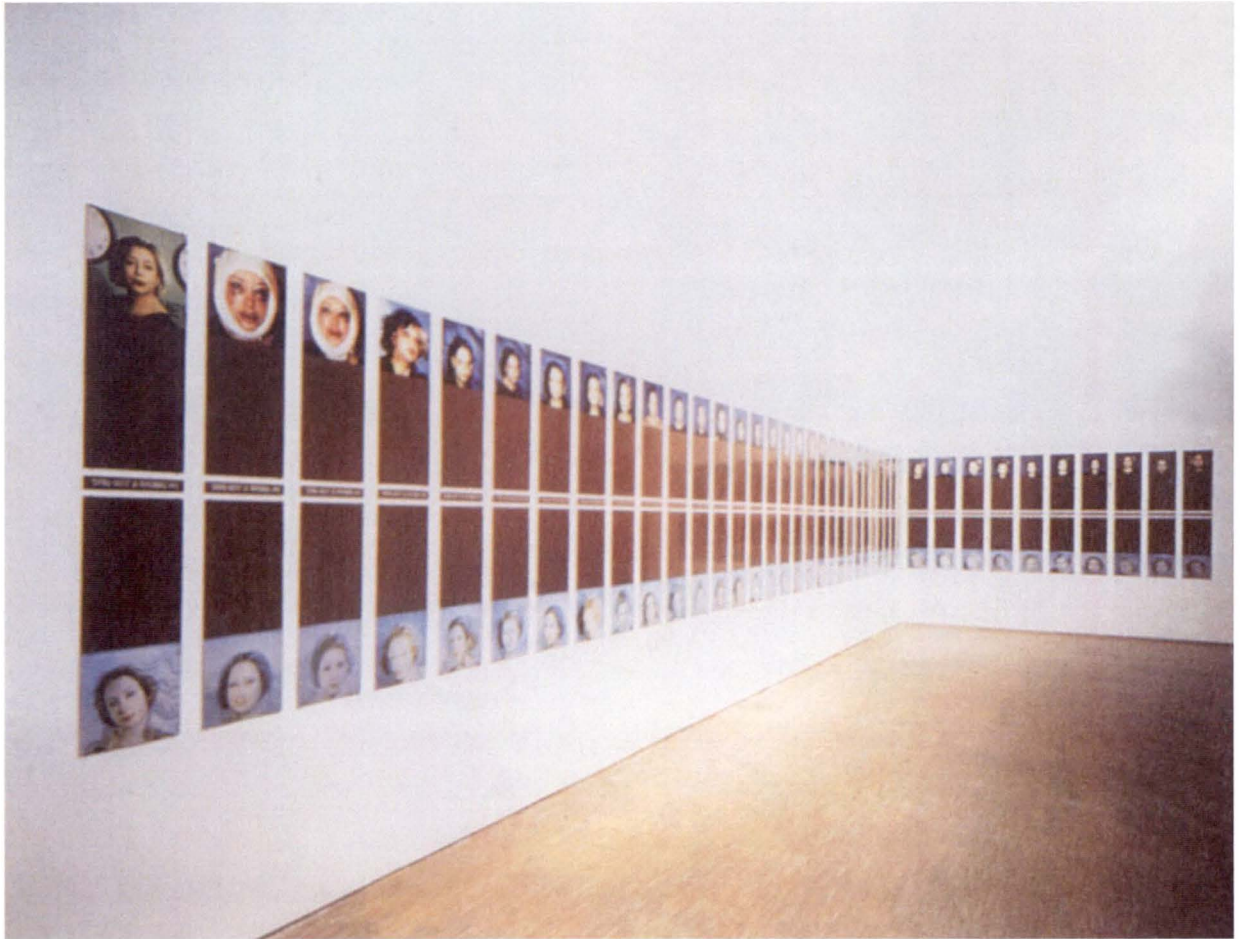


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... "LE MONSTRE COURANT, TATOUÉ, AM-
 BIDEXTRE, HERMAPHRODITE ET METIS,
 QUE POURRAIT-IL NOUS FAIRE VOIR, A
 PRESENT, SOUS SA PEAU? OUI, LE SA-
 NG ET LA CHAIR. LA SCIENCE PARLE D-
 ES ORGANES, DE FONCTIONS, DE CELL-
 ULES ET DE MOLECULES, POUR AVOUE-
 R ENFIN QU'IL Y A BEAU TEMPS QUE L'O-
 N NE PARLE PLUS DE VIE DANS LES
 LABORATOIRES, MAIS ELLE NE DIT JA-
 MAIS LA CHAIR, QUI, TOUT JUSTEMEN-
 T, DESIGNE LE MELANGE, EN UN LIEU
 DONNE DU CORPS, ICI ET MAINTENAN-
 T, DE MUSCLES ET DE SANG, DE PEAU
 ET DE POILS, D'OS, DE NERFS ET DE FO-
 NCTIONS DIVERSES, QUI MELE DONC CE
 QUE LE SAVOIR PERTINENT ANALYSE"...

... "OBICNO STVORENJE, TETOVIRANO,
 LUKAVO, DVOSPOLNO I MELEZNO, ŠTO
 BI NAMA MOGLO POKAZATI, DAKLE,
 ŠTO SE NALAZI IZPOD NJEGOVE KOŽE?
 SVAKAKO, NJEGOVU KRV I NJEGOVO
 MESO. ZNANOST GOVORI O ORGANIMA,
 FUNKCIJAMA, ORGANSKIM STANICAMA,
 MOLEKULAMA, DA BI NA KRAJU
 USTVRDILA, KAKO SE VEC DUZE
 VREMENA NE GOVORI O STVARANJU
 ŽIVOTA U LABORATORIJU. ALI ZNANOST
 NIKAD NE UPOTREBLJAVA RIJEČ MESO,
 ŠTO TAČNO OZNAČAVA SKUP TIJELA, U
 OVOM SLUČAJU TO SU MIŠIĆI I KRV,
 KOŽA I DLAKA, ŽIVCI I RAZLIČITE
 FUNKCIJE, OBUHVATAJUĆI TO ŠTO
 ODREĐENA ZNANOST ANALIZIRA"...

Figure 11 'The text, my flesh and the languages...., soldered metal and burglar-proof glass, 10g of flesh encased in resin, 0.75m x 1.05 m x 0.10m. Text 'Le Tiers- Instruct' by Michel Serres, Penine Hart Gallery, New York, 1993.



Figure 12 'Orlan Glove Wrist Disconnect Components'. MARS Project, 2002.

http://spacecraft.ssl.umd.edu/SSL/SSL_photos/project_photos/MARS/020220.Orlan/Orlan.index.html